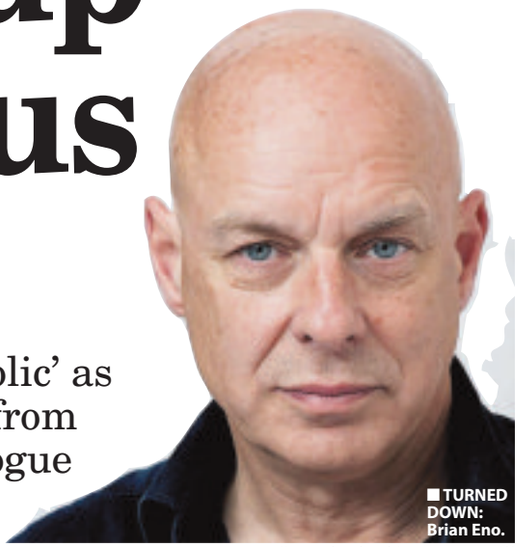
Kensington & Chelsea NEWS

LWN
LONDON WEEKLY NEWS GROUP

First established 1857 | PICK UP A FREE COPY | Thursday, August 27th 2015

Labour reject rock music icon but sign up mysterious Mr Fluff

Leadership contest dubbed 'shambolic' as Kensington's Brian Eno is banned from joining party while '115-year-old' rogue applicant is welcomed in...



TURNED DOWN: Brian Eno.

EXCLUSIVE

By Geoff Baker
geoff@londonweeklynews.co.uk

KENSINGTON rock star Brian Eno has been banned from joining his local Labour Party – but his 115-year-old neighbour, a "Mr Bum Fluff", has been welcomed in.

The party's membership drive and leadership contest took a "shambolic" turn this week when Labour's national HQ blocked Jeremy Corbyn supporter Mr Eno from joining the Kensington group but passed an application from Queens Gate Terrace resident "Mr Fluff", apparently Britain's oldest living person.

Mr Fluff, who told Labour that he was born in the year of the Siege of Mafeking and will celebrate his 116th birthday in October, had his party membership approved without question by Harriet Harman's office.

Clearly, no such person as Mr Fluff exists. But staff of the acting Leader of the Labour Party failed to spot their embarrassing howler when they rubber-stamped Mr Fluff's application to join the now 1,000-strong Kensington group.

But Mr Eno, the widely-respected socialist musician, producer and former member of rock band Roxy Music, was barred from joining by Labour grandees – because he supported the Lib Dems' stand against the Iraq War.

The farcical twist is the latest controversy in the Labour membership row which has seen 3,000 suspected "ringers" attempt to join the more than 120,000 new party supporters and thus be entitled to vote in the leadership battle in which left winger Mr Corbyn is streaking ahead.

Mr Corbyn's leadersip rival Andy Burnham claims that the fierce leadership contest will be skewed by the "infiltrators" who have attempted to sign up since Labour changed its rules to allow the public to vote as a "registered supporter" for just £3.

So far, 3,000 applications have been rejected as suspected vote-riggers by Labour HQ in a weeding out process that Ms Harman claims is "rigorous".

Labour bigwigs believe that many of those who have attempted to join the party are Tories trying to force the vote in Mr Corbyn's favour and thus make a Labour Government unelectable.

Many of the rejected applicants have complained that they have been unfairly blocked – and one of them is Kensington resident Mr Eno.

Kensington Labour members are appalled that their national HQ has made the massive PR blunder of block-

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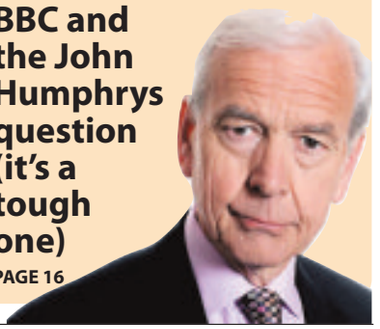

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AMBITIOUS EAST-WEST CYCLE SUPERHIGHWAY NEARS COMPLETION

Prepare to enjoy the ride of your lives

NEW proposals for the last remaining central London section of the Mayor's flagship East-West Cycle Superhighway have been published.

The plans provide a trial two-way segregated cycle track on Spur Road, in front of the Queen Victoria Memorial at Buckingham Palace, closing the last gap in the route and providing continuous fully-segregated and protected cycling across central London from Tower Hill, through Parliament Square to Hyde Park Corner and Lancaster Gate.

They provide a safer route for cyclists through one of central London's most intimidating gyratories, which is also one of the Mayor's 33 "Better Junctions" where major improvements for cyclists have been pledged.

The Mayor, Boris Johnson, said: "This is the final jigsaw piece in what will be one of the world's great cycling routes. The new East West superhighway will be a treasured part of our new network, running through the heart of the capital and past the front door of some of our most loved landmarks, such as the Houses of Parliament and Buckingham Palace."

Public consultation on the Spur Road proposals will run until October 4. Specially-designed

FROM THE MAYOR'S OFFICE

bollards in keeping with the road's heritage and character would be used to segregate cyclists.

Like the current traffic lights and islands, they would be removable for ceremonial occasions. Blue paint would not be used on the road surface by Buckingham Palace or throughout the park. Subject to the outcome of the public consultation, the changes would be implemented at the same time as the rest of the superhighway opens, in summer 2016. They would be trialled for a year to assess their effectiveness.

The proposals also include major benefits for pedestrians and visitors to the Changing of the Guard ceremony, with better pedestrian crossings and almost 900 square metres of new footway to accommodate growing crowds. Cycle-pedestrian conflicts will be reduced by the separation of the existing cyclist and pedestrian tracks on Constitution Hill. The cycle track will also improve the experience for visitors enjoying St James's Park and Green Park, creating a new buffer between the parks and the noise and fumes of vehicles. The proposals involve the removal of traffic lanes on Spur Road but would have little or no impact on traffic on this short stretch.

There will also be segregated cycling facilities either side of the proposed new segregated Spur Road section. Proposals for a new two-way segregated track on Birdcage Walk, also using removable bollards, were consulted on in February and March. The Birdcage Walk plans do not involve the removal of any traffic lanes; Birdcage Walk already has three lanes, of which only two are used by traffic.

The consultation report on those proposals within St James's Park was published this week. It shows strong public support for the proposals, with 71 per cent of respondents to the consultation supporting or partially supporting them. TfL will implement these proposals, including the Birdcage Walk section with a few minor changes, not affecting the segregation element. A route via Horse Guards Road and the existing off-road cycle track on The Mall to Constitution Hill was also included in the February and March consultation.

There was less support for this – people preferred the more direct route via Spur Road which was announced this week – but this route will still be implemented for use on the Central London Grid network of "Quietway" cycle routes.

It will also serve as a superhighway diversion route on the few days – roughly once a month on average and then mainly outside of peak times – when the Spur Road area is closed for ceremonies.

The Mayor's East-West Superhighway, Europe's longest substantially-segregated urban cycle route, will run for 18 miles from Barking to Acton using the existing Cycle Superhighway 3 from Barking to Tower Hill, then new segregated lanes on Upper and Lower Thames Streets, the Victoria Embankment, Parliament Square, Birdcage Walk, Spur Road (subject to consultation), Constitution Hill, South Carriage Drive, West Carriage Drive, Lancaster Gate, Westbourne Terrace and the A40 Westway.

Capital News & Media Limited
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Westminster & Pimlico News
(Established 1857)
Kensington & Chelsea News
(Established 1857 & 1869)
Fulham Chronicle
(Established 1888)
London Weekly News
(Established 2014)

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NEWS FROM KENSINGTON & CHELSEA

Film maker urges change of direction for Crossrail

● By **GEOFF BAKER**
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OSCAR-WINNING Chelsea resident Sir Alan Parker has joined the 3,000 locals fighting against plans for a Crossrail 2 station in the King's Road – slamming the idea as "mindless".

Sir Alan, the winner of 19 BAFTA awards, 10 Golden Globes and 10 Oscars, has hit out at Transport for London and Kensington and Chelsea Council for putting the village on the road to destruction.

"Crossrail in the King's Road is a mindless idea that will destroy the unique character of Chelsea. It's not sensible, not needed and not wanted," said Sir Alan, the director of hit movies including *Midnight Express, Fame, Bugsy Malone, The Commitments, Evita, Angela's Ashes* and *Pink Floyd The Wall.*

Sir Alan's attack comes as Chelsea's anti-Crossrail campaigners say that the former homes of *Winnie-the-Pooh* creator AA Milne and painter Augustus John will be placed at risk as they lie along the proposed train route.

Campaigners warn that boring the twin tunnels could cause damage to these houses and many others – and deep excavation for the station will also cause settlement damage.

■ **FILM CRITIC: Movie director Sir Alan Parker opposes plans for a Crossrail 2 station in the King's Road.**

A Freedom of Information request by the No Crossrail In Chelsea group has found that 600 insurance claims remain outstanding from property owners as a result of settlement damage caused by tunnel or station construction for Crossrail 1.

Chelsea has 240 listed buildings that will be put at risk by the construction, 34 of which are on the King's Road itself, say the campaigners.

The movement to stop a Crossrail 2 station being built in Chelsea has picked up a pace in recent weeks, as celebrities Loyd Grossman, Felicity Kendal, Trevor Eve, Cherie Lunghi – and now Sir Alan Parker – have joined more than 3,000 local residents and business owners in calling for the plans to be ditched.

The No Crossrail in Chelsea group opposes plans for a Crossrail 2 diversion through Chelsea and wants the route from Victoria to Clapham Junction to be direct.

"A Crossrail station would seriously damage the streetscape of Chelsea, ruining the unique charm of the King's Road and its independent businesses, creating yet another cloned High Street and a disruptive nighttime economy," said a spokesman for the group.

The chairman of the No Crossrail in Chelsea campaign, local resident Chris Lenon, said: "It will be a travesty if some of Chelsea's most famous buildings are damaged by the unnecessary and unwanted diversion of Crossrail 2 through the village."

A final consultation of local residents, businesses and stakeholders is due to take place in September. A decision on the final route of Crossrail 2 is due to be made following this study.

If given the go ahead, station construction would take eight years, during which the King's Road will be closed for five years, causing traffic congestion on Chelsea Embankment, Fulham Road, the roads between and further north.

The Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, has suggested the concerns of Chelsea residents may be listened to. He wrote: "There has not been a definite decision taken on any Crossrail 2 station location, and nor will there be until there is a full consultation with the public."

Labour reject rock icon but welcome Mr Fluff

FROM PAGE 1

ing such a high-profile supporter who would have influenced many to join the Labour cause.

Mr Eno has blasted the Labour grandees as narrow-minded but he says he will continue to campaign for Mr Corbyn to be elected leader.

Mr Eno told this newspaper: "My feelings about this are pretty straightforward: I wanted to support Jeremy Corbyn, a man with whom I've spoken to at many demonstrations and who chairs the Stop the War Coalition, of which I am a member and a financial supporter.

"I supported the Lib-Dems in two elections because they stood for certain things that I believed in strongly – most importantly for me, they were against the Iraq War. It was that war more than anything else that disillusioned me about Labour. The unholy coalition with the Tories to make that war of choice happen disappointed me.

"I voted Labour in every election until the Iraq War, after which I shifted to the Lib-Dems.

"I still believe that the position they took then was the right one, and I still believe that voting for them in 2010 was a reasonable decision. At that time Labour was still resolutely New Labour and unwilling to admit that they'd made a monumental blunder.

"Corbyn voted (and demonstrated) against that blunder and his views on most other things are entirely consistent with mine. And, I might add, with what the Labour Party claims to stand for.

"I don't feel it necessary to make a breast-beating recantation and say I was wrong about the Lib-Dems because I don't think I was.

"My main intention was, and still is, to stop the Tories, and to vote for a proper Opposition in this country. Labour, in my opinion, was not a proper Opposition for at least a decade. Now there is the chance that they can be again, and that's what I want to support.

"And, yes, I still have respect for the Lib-Dems – as we now start to see the results of a newly-unrestrained Tory Party at work we might retrospectively reassess the importance of the Lib-Dem contribution when they were in coalition.

"If the Labour Party isn't broad-minded enough to understand that somebody could switch support between two parties on the basis of such considerations as these then I'm afraid it probably isn't broadminded enough for many of the new supporters Corbyn has attracted.

"Like me, they probably aren't interested in parties as such: they're interested in policies, and in the possibility of a better future, whoever delivers it. If this outlandish idea is a blow to your pride then so be it: if you can't work with anyone unless they show unswerving, unquestioning, eternal loyalty then perhaps you're in the wrong country.

"I will continue to support Corbyn and will be speaking in the next few weeks at rallies in his favour. If he becomes leader I will vote Labour again. If he doesn't...well, I'll have to make my choice based on what's on offer.

"Mark Steel (another reject like me, another person who's been on many of the same demos) recently wrote a newspaper article which captured the thing perfectly: you don't know how to harness the support you're getting, so, opting for a simpler, more black-and-white, them-and-us life, you're rejecting it."

An investigation by BBC News has discovered that 3,000 applications to join the party have been rejected by Labour HQ staff who are meant to be going over each application with a fine tooth-comb in order to spot pretenders planning to disrupt the leadership vote.

Last week Labour's acting leader Ms Harman said the elimination process was "rigorous" and she promised that non-genuine supporters would be "weeded out".

"If they have voted their votes will be cancelled," she said.

But now the acting leader has egg on her face and there is likely to be uproar at Labour HQ that unthinking staff have turned down Brian Eno whilst approving for membership somebody who evidently does not exist.

"It is blatantly obvious that there is no such person as Mr Bum Fluff and HQ's decision to grant him membership is indicative of how the whole leadership contest has become shambolic," said a member of the Kensington Labour group. "It beggars belief that Harriet Harman's team has its eye so far off the ball that they could approve an application from a man claiming to be 115-years-old without having the wit to suspect something fishy.

"His name alone – Bum Fluff – should have rung alarm bells in even the most simple mind that this was a bogus application. It is ridiculous that Mr Fluff has been granted membership and it just makes Labour HQ into a laughing stock.

"The vetting process is a joke, it's more like rigor mortis than rigorous."

If Mr Fluff did exist, his great age would also make him Britain's oldest living person, a year senior to the current record-holder, Gladys Hooper from Ryde on the Isle of Wight.

He would also hold the distinction of being the only living person in the UK born in the year when Sir Edward Elgar premiered *The Enigma Variations* and Joseph Conrad published *Heart Of Darkness* and he would share a birth year with Alfred Hitchcock, C S Forester and Noel Coward.

The *Kensington & Chelsea News* knows the real identity of Mr Fluff; far from being the UK's oldest man and possessor of Britain's most unfortunate name, he is believed to be a much-respected businessman and pillar of the Kensington community. There is no suggestion that the gentleman concerned was planning to disrupt the Labour leadership vote or make mischief, although he is believed to have a fine sense of humour.

Troubadour club saved from closure

WEST London's legendary Troubadour club has been saved from closing down.

The tiny venue in Old Brompton Road – famous for hosting early-career gigs by Bob Dylan, Jimi Hendrix, Paul Simon, Adele and Ed Sheeran – was under threat of shutting its doors after losing revenue because neighbours' noise complaints led to early closing of its popular garden bar.

But now the 120-capacity cellar bar, restaurant and coffee shop venue which opened in 1954 has a new owner and he has pledged that The Troubadour will rock on.

The venue has been taken over by existing shareholder Giles McNamee. The previous owner, Susie Thornhill, who took on the venue in 1998 with her husband Simon, will continue to run the coffee shop and gig venue which is popular with Prince Harry and thousands of music fans.

Mr McNamee said: "Nothing makes me happier than deepening my existing, long-term commitment to The Troubadour. Simon and Susie have done a wonderful job under exceptionally challenging circumstances at keeping The Troubadour open, authentic, and full of the spirit in which it was founded over 60 years ago.

"As anyone who has crossed the threshold of The Troubadour knows, the venue is rich in energy and inspiration and I'm thrilled to play a larger role now in its continuation and future health."

The venue had faced financial difficulties after Kensington and Chelsea Council served a noise abatement notice, forcing the closure the garden bar after 9pm and leading to a loss in revenue The world-famous Troubadour became a Mecca for music fans as the London birthplace of rock heroes. Bob Dylan performed one of his first gigs in London there in 1962, when he played under the name of Blind Boy Grunt. Paul Simon played there in 1965 and it was a favourite venue of Jimi Hendrix when he lived in London in the Sixties.

KPH 'fights on'

THE current management of Portobello's hidstoric KPH is still battling to keep control of the famous old pub.

Although the owner Steven Archer is confident of taking possession of the KPH next month, after a long and costly court case, manager Vince Power says he is still fighting to stay and keep running the 150-year-old landmark bar as it is.

Mr Power said: "We have applied for permission to appeal. The fight to keep the KPH stayin as it is goes on and we have a lot of support for this from the community."

Mr Archer said that if he wins the legal tussle he will keep the pub as a pub but will refurbish the building.

Artist backed

A YOUNG, up-and-coming artist has been awarded a three-year bursary and studio space as part of a council's artists' studio programme.

The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and Chelsea Arts Club Trust announced two new bursary schemes, one for visual artists and one for fashion designers, earlier this year. Emma Alonze has been selected to receive the visual arts bursary.

Graduating from the Royal College of Art in 2013, with an MA in Sculpture, Emma uses a mixture of sculpture and performance.

Chelsea Arts Club Trust generously supports the two bursaries. Each is for three years, at the rate of £10,000 p.a. The generosity of the trust is matched by the council, which will cover the rent and rates on each studio.

LWN

NEWS FROM KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA

■ MUSICAL CELEBRATION: The Erebus Ensemble and their conductor Tom Williams.

New music festival just days away

THE first Kensington Olympia Festival of Music and the Arts gets under way in a few weeks' time – in the beautiful parish church of St Matthew, Kensington Olympia, on the corner of Sinclair, Masbro and Fielding Roads.

The week of concerts, art exhibitions, school events, architectural walks and literary talks kicks off on Saturday, September 12 and runs to Sunday, September 20. On the first Saturday the monumental Bach Mass in B minor is performed by The Oxford Spezzati soloists, chorus and orchestra under its director Nicholas Mumby. They are young professionals – mostly lawyers, doctors and accountants – who come together to put on high quality concerts for their own enjoyment and that of their loyal followers.

The mass is considered one of the cornerstones of western classical music and represents music from the great composer's entire musical career.

On Monday and Friday there are historical and architectural walks through the local neighbourhood led by Caroline MacMillan, who has lived in west London most of her life and for several years has been guiding walks in the area.

The Monday evening concert is Songs from the Shows hosted by Duncan Day who is rapidly establishing himself as a host and producer on the London scene. On Tuesday morning literary historian Isabel Raphael gives a talk on literary Hammersmith. In the evening, one of the country's leading choral groups, The Erebus Ensemble, appear on the latest leg of their 2015 tour entitled 'A Tale of Two Traditions.'

For information about all the events, including ticket prices – which are all bookable online – go to *www.kofma.co.uk* or just turn up on the day.

Anxious moments as unfaithful are exposed

By Geoff Baker

THOUSANDS of residents of Kensington and Chelsea could be quaking in fear that partners will discover their affairs after membership details of a love cheaters' website were made public.

Last week hackers dumped on the internet all of the names of members of the Ashley Madison infidelity site.

The Canada-based online dating service, which boasts a slogan "Life is short – have an affair", has 37 million members in 46 countries – and rather a lot in Kensington and Chelsea, it appears.

In fact Ashley Madison claims that the royal borough has more adulterers than anywhere else in London.

Before membership details were hacked by the group calling itself The Impact Team, Ashley Madison's publicists claimed that its members included 6.8 per cent of residents of the borough who were married or living with a partner.

That would mean 4,760 residents of Kensington and Chelsea have signed up to the site – and now may be hoping that their partners do not trawl through the list of cheaters' email addresses that the hackers have made public.

According to Ashley Madison, their data suggests that the posher the area, the more its residents are inclined to cheat.

Ashley Madison founder Noel Biderman said: "Affluence is a common element found in most cities' top ten lists while the proclivity to cheat often goes hand in hand with opportunity. Those with more disposable income and freedom to travel are even more likely to stray."

London's most adulterous boroughs (% of residents who are on Ashley Madison infidenlity site)

1 Kensington & Chelsea	6.8%
2 The City	6.4%
3 Richmond	6.3%
4 Camden	5.8%
5 Westminster	4.1%
6 Wandsworth	3.7%
7 Hounslow	3.2%
8 Greenwich	2.9%
9 Sutton	2.7%
10 Islington	2.4%

NEWS FROM NICK ...

with Nicholas Paget-Brown, Leader of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea

POST office branches in the Royal Borough have not had a good innings in recent years. Since 2004 we have seen nine closures across the borough, in spite of concerted campaigns by residents and councillors to keep them open.

Last March I wrote to Post Office boss Paula Vennells to protest at the closure of Kings Walk Post Office. The lease on the building had expired. I explained that it was an enormous loss to Chelsea residents, many of whom are elderly, do not own a car and are dependent on their local office and asked if it was possible to look for alternative locations or talk with Cadogan Estate to see if another site could be found. The solicitous reply acknowledged that the closure would create difficulties for some customers but offered no hope that it would find another site.

> **'I have real concerns about the loss of another local post office'**

Now it seems there is another closure on the cards, this time the Earls Court branch at 185 Earl's Court Road.

The Post Office is proposing merging the Earls Court branch with the Kensington High Street branch and says that the proposed merger is part of its on-going plans to create a network that is sustainable and modern.

It argues that the number of customers using Earls Court has declined over the past five years and the branch is no longer commercially sustainable.

While I have sympathy for any organisation working to meet the challenges of operating in the twenty-first century, I have real concerns about the loss of another local post office and the impact this will have on residents.

Also, given the lengthy queues witnessed in the branch, the idea that it is 'not profitable' does stretch credibility.

Local councillors from Earl's Court ward have already met with Post Office officials to hammer home what a valuable community asset this branch is for an area that is home to a high number of supported and sheltered housing complexes. Not only that, but there are a number of new residential developments planned for the area.

The Post Office has already started a 12-week consultation on the proposed merger and I urge all residents to respond to it.

Be sure to remind your neighbours and friends, who may be on holiday now, to respond before Wednesday, September 16. You can find details of it here *www.postofficeviews.co.uk/liveconsultation.php* by searching 'Earls Court'.

You can question Post Office officials yourself at a public meeting the council is organising on Tuesday 8 September at St Cuthbert's Church, Philbeach Gardens, SW5 9EB. It will start at 7pm.

If you cannot make the meeting, email your questions and concerns directly to *comments@postoffice.co.uk* or phone 03457 223344. Whichever channel you choose please do take time to let the Post Office know your views.

THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA

To contact the Leader of the Council, Cllr Nick Paget-Brown, email theleader@rbkc.gov.uk

LWN NEWS FROM WESTMINSTER & PIMLICO edit@londonweeklynews.co.uk

Watch out for tropical ants plague

● By LWN reporter
GEOFF BAKER

A PLAGUE of tropical ants is threatening Westminster – huge colonies coming from abroad are spreading over central London and bringing the risk of bites, stings and fatal disease.

Office workers, hotel guests, hospital patients and people living in flats are being warned to watch out for the tropical ants which experts say can completely take over a large office block in less than six months.

Pest experts say species from all over the world, relatively unknown in this country until recently, are now establishing large colonies with up to 200 queens – and carrying the risk of deadly disease.

"Multiple-occupancy buildings such as blocks of flats create perfect living conditions for the insects and, because they're so difficult to contain, it's feared the problem is likely to get worse," said a spokesman for pest control experts Basis Prompt.

"Pharoah and Argentine ants have been in the UK for decades, but the newcomers, which include Ghost, Big-Headed and Crazy ants, are now emerging and could pose a threat to public health.

"Some will bite or sting and they can carry a wide range of disease organisms such as streptococcus, which causes infections. They can also contract salmonella, which makes them particularly dangerous if they contaminate food."

Salmonella is responsible for around 80 deaths in the UK each year. The streptococcus bacteria can cause meningitis, pneumonia and endocarditis, an inflammation of the heart that can lead to heart failure. Children are especially at risk of streptococcus. The bacteria is responsible for some 30 young deaths a year, with another 200 left with disabilities including blindness and cerebral palsy after contracting the bug.

Pest control companies have reported a large increase in the number of tropical ant infestations in Britain in the last three years, but now the problem has become so big that they are issuing public health warnings.

The ants plague is being blamed on the continuing growth of world trade and people unknowingly bringing queen ants back in their luggage after trips abroad.

"Ant species that were once contained to their own parts of the world now seem to be on something of a global tour," said Basis Prompt ant controller David Cross.

"The population of tropical ants in London is certainly growing all the time and we're now seeing many more problems with colonies of certain species than we have witnessed in the past.

"Most arrive here via container ships from different parts of the world either in food or soft furnishings. Others are brought in by people who travel abroad and come back with a queen in their luggage. And once they're established, they become ever more prevalent.

"A single seed colony can populate a large office block, almost to the exclusion of all other insect pests, in less than six months.

Mr Cross said blocks of flats, hostels, hotels, hospitals and prisons are also ideal homes for the insects.

"Most tropical ants can't live outside and need warmth to survive so they can thrive in places where heating is on all the time. Areas around heated water pipes in particular provide them with an ideal environment and they'll often be found foraging for protein or sugars around bins or behind fridges.

"They'll generally head to areas where food is manufactured or prepared, which is why hotels, pubs, restaurants and cafes are at risk too."

Colonies of some tropical ants can contain up to 200 queens – which makes treatment of an infestation particularly difficult. The pest experts are warning the public not to try to remove ants' nests themselves as they could spread the infestation.

Here's what to watch for...

Pharoah ants

TYPICALLY 2mm long, they are light yellow to reddish brown in colour with a darker abdomen.

Their origin is unknown, but they've now been introduced to virtually every area of the world and are notorious for being a major indoor nuisance, especially in hospitals, prisons, other institutions that are permanently heated. They are increasingly common in urban housing blocks, but are rarely found in conventional housing. Infestations often consist of more than one nest and 'satellite' nests can spread throughout buildings and complexes.

Argentine ants

A DARK ant which was once native to South America. The invasive species became established in Mediterranean countries before spreading to the UK recently.

Worker ants are around 3mm long, with queens – there are often as many of eight for every 1,000 workers – two to four times that length. They will set up home in the ground, cracks in concrete walls, spaces between timbers, even among human belongings.

Ghost ants

SO named because their legs and abdomen look transparent, with only the head and thorax being dark brown in colour.

The colouring makes this tiny ant (1.5 mm) seem even smaller. The tropical species, now found in the UK, is sometimes known as the 'corpse' ant, because of the unpleasant smell they secrete then crushed. They exhibit a need for moisture, and although colonies are usually established outside, they can readily set up camp inside domestic houses during dry conditions.

Becoming more common particularly in centrally-heated buildings, there can be many more than one queen in a colony - a fact which makes them tricky to eradicate and which means their control must be left in the hands of professional operators.

■ ALERT: Ghost ants.

Crazy ants

ORIGINALLY native to Argentina and Brazil, the name comes from the fact they're prone to sporadic movements. They are 3.2mm long with a slender, long-legged body covered reddish-brown hairs.

Colonies have multiple queens, which makes them difficult to fully exterminate, and they do not use centralised nests or mounds, living instead under stones or piles. Strangely – and dangerously – they are attracted to electrical equipment and can cause short circuits and even fires by chewing through insulation.

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Holidaymakers get away – and abandon dogs

HOLIDAYMAKERS jetting off for their summer break have been deserting hundreds of pets and pushing Battersea Dogs Home to almost burst at the kennels.

Battersea has seen a 204% increase this year in the number of intake calls during school summer holidays.

The world famous rescue centre has seen a surge in the number of abandoned pets as owners head to sunnier climes – with 716 calls in one fortnight from vacationing callers wanting Battersea to take care of their pets while they are off to sun themselves.

"We've been full to near capacity," said a spokesman.

"A one-year-old German Spitz was brought to Battersea by his owners who were going on holiday and had no one to take care of him. They said they had already sacrificed a holiday the previous year and didn't want to do the same again."

Woody Woodford-Price, Battersea's Intake Co-ordinator, said: "It's holiday season and people don't always take pets into account when they're booking to go away. So it's rescue centres like Battersea who end up taking their pets in and finding new homes for them.

"We've had people confuse us with boarding kennels, asking if we can take their pet for a fortnight while they go away and others that blatantly bring in a 'stray' dog and send someone else to claim it back a week later.

"Dogs brought in under such false pretences are potentially taking the space that another genuinely needy dog might otherwise have occupied."

Battersea is urging prospective dog and cat owners to think about the responsibility and commitment pets bring with them.

"Pets aren't disposable, so if you are planning a holiday make sure to plan for your pet too, with either boarding kennels or a pet sitter," said a spokesman.

OAR-SOME EFFORT: The Great River Race has grown in stature and popularity over the years, now attracting crews in all kinds of boats from all over the world.

MAKING WAVES: The Henley Whalers, in Molly, take a breather on the River Thames. Next month crews will do battle once more in The Great River Race.

Marines prepare to do battle in capital's great river marathon

IT all began with 72 sailing enthusiasts choosing 20 different boat types representing six countries. These included an Hawaiian outrigger war canoe, Viking longboat, Norwegian scow, Canadian C-8 canoe and a Chinese dragon boat.

They were propelled by barely teenage sea scouts, hardened offshore rowing veterans, police officers, pub regulars,the armed forces, boating societies and museum staff. Anyone in fact who enjoyed the thrill of the river.

That was in 1988. Today The Great River Race, from Millwall on the Isle of Dogs through to the winning post at Richmond via Westminster, Lambeth, Wandsworth, Battersea, Putney, Hammersmith, Chiswick and Kew, has become an annual tradition called London's River Marathon.

This year the tough guys – the Dutch Marines – will be taking part in a head-to-head challenge against the Royal Navy, who have promised at least one of its fleet will be the Royal Marines.

By the time the Dutch reach the start at Millwall, they will just have completed a charity row of over 220 miles across the North Sea, perhaps providing the Royal Marines with a slight advantage over the 21.6 mile course.

On Saturday, September 12, more than 300 boats carrying 2,400 competitors racing for 35 trophies, will compete for what has become the biggest and most prestigious event of its kind in Europe.

The race has gone from strength to strength since 1988. It has quadrupled in size and has attracted fascinating entries such as a magnificent replica 54' bronze age Greek galley; canvas and tar Irish naomhogs of the type reputed to have crossed the Atlantic in the eight Royal Oak built in Co Down, Northern Ireland, at the beginning of 1800s.

The race has attracted a stellar cast of celebrities who have come along to fire the cannon to get the race under way. This has included Sting, Jerry Hall, Sir Steven Redgrave, June Brown (*EastEnders'* Dot Cotton), Sir Trevor MacDonald, Jane Horrocks, Virginia Bottomley MP, William Franklin, Tony Banks MP, Dame Tanni Grey Thompson and many more. Furthermore it really has become truly international event with crews coming from America, Canada, Croatia, Poland, Holland, Italy, Sweden, France, Germany, Ireland, and the Channel Islands, as well as all over the UK.

The Great River Race starts from the Millwall Slipway, opposite the Docklands Sailing Centre, Westferry Road E14 3QS at 10.45 on Saturday, September 12

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Could we soon see a shark in the Thames? (We did in 1787)

● By **GEOFF BAKER**
geoff@londonweeklynews.co.uk

RIVER-WATCHERS are being urged to look out for sharks in the Thames.

As the river's water-quality has improved, dolphins, seals and even whales have returned to the Thames – and now speculation is growing that sharks could follow.

Man-eating sharks have been sighted in the Thames before – but not for more than 200 years.

Before the 19th century the Thames was clean enough to sustain all sorts of fish, but by 1850 the rise in sewage pouring into the Thames killed off most species.

In 1787, before the river water became so contaminated that the Thames became known as "the Great Stink", a nine-foot shark was landed by fishermen at Poplar – and it turned out to be a man-eater.

The incident was recorded in the *London Annual Register* of the time. It listed the huge shark "being from the tip of the snout to the extremity of the tail nine feet three inches, from the shoulder to the extremity of the body measured six feet one inch; round the body in the thickest part, six feet inches; the width of the jaws when extended, 17 inches; it had five rows of teeth, and from that circumstance was supposed to have been five years old.

"When it was taken on shore and opened, they found in the inside a silver watch, a metal chain and a cornelian seal, with some fragments of gold lace, supposed to have belonged to an unfortunate who had fallen overboard".

Although no sharks have yet been seen recently, 10 years of public sightings show that large marine mammals are regularly found in the River Thames.

The Zoological Society of London (ZSL) has received records of 2,732 animals being spotted over the decade.

Seals were the most common animal seen, with many spotted around Canary Wharf. The public also reported seeing 444 porpoises and dolphins and 49 whales. Seals were seen as far upstream as Teddington and Hampton Court Palace. Dolphins and porpoises were spotted at Teddington Lock, with large pods spotted close to Kew Gardens and Deptford

Joanna Barker, ZSL's European conservation projects manager, said: "Many people looking into the Thames see a murky, dirty environment.

"But beneath the waves it is full of life. We have a huge range of fish and invertebrates, and also top predators."

Just 50 years ago, the Thames was so polluted it was declared "biologically extinct", too dirty for anything to survive there.

But the public sightings confirm that the river is springing back to life. And many animals are venturing further into the English capital's waterway.

A whale even visited central London in 2006, but the bottle-nose did not survive. Other, healthier whales have been seen around Gravesend.

"The fact we get so many sightings in central London suggests the fish stocks are moving in to support these marine predators," said Miss Barker.

"So we think that London and the Thames Estuary is an important environment for these species And we are keen to get more sightings year on year, and to build up a better picture of the places that marine mammals are using."

The public are being asked to send their sightings to ZSL at *www.zsl.org*

LWN

LONDON WIDE

Family musical is great – but ticket prices are horror show, say parents

● By **GEOFF BAKER**
geoff@londonweeklynews.co.uk

THOUSANDS of London children face the prospect of a disappointing Christmas this year as sky-high prices for the West End's latest festive show are way beyond the pockets of ordinary families.

Parents have reacted in uproar over the £240 price tag for a best seat at the forthcoming *Elf The Musical* – dubbed "Wealth The Musical" by disgruntled mums and dads.

The much-anticipated new production – which stars former Girls Aloud idol Kimberley Walsh – opens at the Dominion Theatre on October 24 for a limited run until January 2.

The cheapest seats – right at the back of the 2,160-capacity theatre – are selling for £51.80, plus up to £16.25 in booking and other fees.

But Elf visitors who don't want to watch the stage adaptation of the 2003 hit movie in miniature could have to fork out up to £1,000 for a family of four night out in the better seats.

And those prices, say protesting parents who have furiously complained on social media about the soaring cost of a West End spend, is out of reach for the many who will be pestered by their children for seats to the Santa-themed show.

The rising price of London theatre tickets has shocked the industry. Last month its own trade paper, *The Stage*, revealed that prices had rocketed by 33% in the last year, with the average best seat for a musical costing over £100.

Before *Elf* opened its bonanza box office, the most expensive ticket was £202 for *The Book Of Mormon*, which was charging £152 last year.

But now the musical about an over-sized pixie has topped that with a price believed to be the highest in West End history. The show is a Theatre Royal Plymouth production, where it ran last year with top price tickets at £42.50.

The producers of *Elf*, which also stars Ben Forster and Joe McGann, have defended the prices as a simple case of supply and demand.

In a statement they said: "Ticket prices are set according to the commercial terms and budgets for the show. These prices – like all things – will fluctuate depending on supply and demand. *Elf* is a large-budget show with only a 10-week run in the West End and we have been delighted with the interest shown in this London premiere run."

Defenders of the rising price of a night out at West End theatres have also pointed out that many top concerts in the capital can cost more. Two years ago the best seats for Barbra Streisand's shows were selling at £450.

■ **Elf preview – Talk of the Town, see Page 20**

Free celebration of African culture

LONDON will celebrate African culture on October 10 with a free event in trafalgar Square.

Everyone is invited to attend Africa on the Square, which follows on from the huge success of last year's inaugural event and is sponsored by Lebara and Air France and supported by media partner The Voice.

The stage line-up, compered by Esther Alade and Usifu Jalloh, the Cowfoot Prince, reflects the diversity of London African communities. Performers include: Alfa Sackey and Afrik Bawantu (Ghana); Saidi Kanda and Mvula Mandondo (Tanzania); Krar Collective (Ethiopia); Tony Dudu and The Gumbe Jazz (Guinea Bissau) and Abdoulaye Samb and Minnjiaraby (Senegal). Kemi, winner of the talent competition held at the event last year, will make a special appearance on the day. There will be a West African drumming circle, plus African acrobats and dancers. DJ Abrantree, one of the most recognisable voices and personalities on the urban and African music scene, will DJ the event and introduce guest artists Zafi B and Moelogo.

There will be an exclusive fashion show directed by Africa Fashion Week London. There will be an African market selling a range of African themed products, including fashion and arts and crafts, plus food stalls, and a host of activities for children and families to get involved in, such as hair braiding, face-painting, mosaics-making and batik-making.

The event is programmed by Open the Gate.

A highlight will be Africa on the Square Talent Showcase giving aspiring performers aged 16 to 25 the opportunity to perform in front of a live audience, with an overall winner being selected by the audience.

Mayor of London Boris Johnson said: "London's diverse African communities play a key role in all aspects of life in the capital, particularly in its culture scene thanks to their thriving and colourful traditions.

"I am delighted that this celebration of African culture in Trafalgar Square is returning following the huge success of last year's event."

For information go to: *www.london.gov.uk/africa*

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Free ride to confidence for cyclists

MORE people took to their bicycles on London's roads last year – the highest since records began.

The number of cyclists on roads in Westminster increased by 20 per cent from the previous year and the uptake is predicted to grow further next year.

A Westminster City Council spokesman said: "It is easy to see the appeal – regular cycling can help you improve fitness, is an easy way to fit exercise into your daily routine and is also a greener and more economical mode of travel.

"Despite this, the number of people attending free cycling training on Westminster roads, led by the Cycle Confident initiative, has not increased on a similar scale.

"While group training for novice cyclists has increased by 20 per cent, alarmingly, the uptake of free one-to-one training has decreased by 15 per cent."

Commenting on the disproportionate uptake in training, Cllr Heather Acton, Westminster City Council cabinet member for sustainability and parking, said: "We are delighted that more people are cycling in Westminster; our 2014 cycle strategy aimed to open the city up to more cyclists and it seems to be working.

"However, it is a real concern that the increase in the number of cyclists on our roads does not correlate with the uptake of free cycle training. We'll continue to urge cyclists to register for our free cycle training, which is open to anyone who lives, works or studies in Westminster, so that they feel equipped to enjoy their bikes on our roads in this unique area."

Westminster City Council has produced videos of real cyclists on Westminster roads. In a series of nine videos, cyclists ride about Westminster streets on their every-day routes with their bikes fitted with cameras, capturing the scenarios cyclists find themselves in.

The videos also offer commentary on the situation, giving practical advice. The nine cycle safety videos produced illustrate the following issues:

- Safe cycling in Westminster
- Mixing with pedestrians
- Right turns at junctions among vehicles
- Cycling in busy pedestrian areas
- Negotiating pinch points and being aware of spacing on the road
- Cycling around parked vehicles
- Turning right on busy roads
- Complex intersections and junctions
- Passing stopping vehicles.

The aim of the videos is to display the practical skills needed in the various situations and to foster a mutual understanding and respect when sharing the road.

Highlighting the situations that may arise on Westminster roads, the city council is encouraging cyclists to brush up on roads skills and increase their confidence on the bike with a free cycling course.

The courses are free and open to anyone who lives, works or studies in Westminster and teach the techniques needed to cope with traffic, road positioning, signaling and general cycle safety. Courses take place in various locations, and complete novices can join a free group training session to build up confidence in an off-road area.

Cllr Acton said: "These videos offer a unique perspective from the cyclist, showing real situations that happen on our network of roads and junctions. They are intended to help increase cycling awareness for all road users."

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Charlie Pipes Up!

This country needs an apprenticeship tsar – I'm the man for the job!

THIS year's GCSE results day highlighted the fact that we may have won a battle in the struggle for more apprenticeships, but there's still a long way to go before we win the war.

It's taken long enough, but finally it's commonly accepted that vocational training is a bloody good way to make something of yourself – just ask my recruitment department, they've been swamped with hundreds of applications from school leavers!

Without blowing my own trumpet too much, I'm a prime example, and there are many more. Lord Bamford, the chairman of JCB, Sir Terry Matthews, chairman of Mitel and former F1 team principal Ross Brawn, to name a few – are all former apprentices. I think you'd agree they've all done all right for themselves.

For far too long young people have been hoodwinked into believing that securing a university place was the Holy Grail, and a sure-fire way of walking into a well-paid job. I've been arguing the opposite for a while now, but research from the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development which revealed that many graduates, a staggering 58.8 per cent to be exact, have ended up doing non-graduate jobs has surely shown what a load of rubbish that is.

If you'd have switched on the TV on Thursday morning, it was hard to miss the fact that the message has been received loud and clear; there has been a significant shift in the attitude of our school leavers. They've begun to see that there are options – like apprenticeships – other than university that will provide a more direct gateway to a career for life, which avoids racking up huge debts.

The interest in vocational learning and apprenticeships is an encouraging step in the right direction. However, there is still a severe provision failure that must be addressed.

In the previous academic year 120,000 under 19s started an apprenticeship. Compare this with the 400,000 young people already accepted onto university courses this year and it's clear to see that enough isn't being done to support the growth of apprenticeships.

I'd take on upwards of 40 new tradesmen tomorrow if I hadn't already dried up the supply of sufficiently skilled workers in the capital. I've even resorted to widening my search area to the north of the country, in the hope candidates would relocate. There just aren't enough quality tradespeople to go around and this stems back to the historic lack of vocational training.

> **There just aren't enough quality tradespeople to go round**

That's why I've been calling for a fully-funded national apprenticeship scheme, which would rebalance the UK's training provision and in due course, eliminate our skills gap. It would cut youth unemployment and get youngsters into a skilled career for life – it's a no-brainer but something we;re still yet to see brought in.

Following the appointment of Michelle Mone as the "start-up tsar" maybe it's an appropriate time to give vocational learning the same attention and support. I say we bring in an apprenticeship tsar to shake it up – I'd be more than happy to throw my hat into the ring.

Views expressed are those of the author and not necessarily those of this newspaper

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LWN

NEWS FROM WESTWAY TRUST

UNDER THE WESTWAY

This great new venue will be open to all

Angela McConville, Chief Executive of Westway Trust, announces a new venue on the Westway estate and explains that it will do much more than showcase great art...

THIS week I am thrilled to welcome an exciting new enterprise – the Westbank - into the fold.

Westbank are the new tenants of the café, art and event space on the first floor, 3-5 Thorpe Close, formerly known as The Flyover and before that the Inn on the Green.

It will be run by entrepreneurs Tommy Blaquiere and Paul Saunders, who have successfully operated the West Bank Gallery in Westbourne Grove for the past four years. Their gallery showcases and promotes street, urban and contemporary art and Tommy and Paul typify the creativity, energy and commitment we are ever seeking to attract to and support on the estate.

When the venue opens next month it will be available for a wide range of community events on at least one day and one evening every week plus a Saturday evening and a Sunday afternoon every month. This commitment is written into the contract between Westbank and Westway.

These community events may include live music; performance – such as dance, theatre, singing; arts and crafts workshops; community art exhibitions; community meetings; training; social events and cultural programmes; screenings and launch events.

These are just examples – Westbank and Westway are open to all suggestions for events from any of the many diverse groups in our local community.

If you have an idea, we want to hear about it!

Tommy and Paul are investing heavily in a refurbishment which will make the venue attractive and suitable for a wide range of uses.

In addition to the community events, Westbank will provide art shows, workshops, parties and events, and will have a new fully-licensed bar, cutting edge sound system and acoustics and a balcony with aerial sculptures, from which people can experience a bird's eye view of Portobello Green. The café will serve healthy food such as salads, shakes, smoothies, soup and wraps – simple, nice and no doubt hugely popular, especially with users of the Westway Sports and Fitness Centre.

The new enterprise will create full time jobs and up to 20 part-time positions, including sound engineers, music teachers, bar staff and security.

Westbank has already demonstrated its commitment with its track record in helping to tackle social issues. Earlier this year it ran a tri-borough anti-knife crime campaign where young offenders were taught street art and graffiti, coming up with a logo that said "Say no to knife crime". It has also hosted charity art auctions and run graffiti courses for Stoke Mandeville Hospital and Age UK.

Our agreement with Westbank for their new venue here in Thorpe Close epitomises our broader goals for estate management and promotion of enterprise opportunities, across the whole area.

We pride ourselves on our role as a socially responsible landlord. Through good stewardship and collaboration with the community, we want to ensure that this vibrant part of London thrives – socially, as well as economically.

The Westway is already home to 122 companies, employing over a thousand people. We build relationships with, and support, businesses that recognise the importance of, and play a role in, promoting social and economic wellbeing. We follow three basic principles when developing a partnership – organisations must demonstrate sound financial and business acumen; make a positive contribution to the local culture and economy; and enable community involvement/ activity.

Organisations must also celebrate and encourage local talent, enterprise and entrepreneurship on the estate.

Our Creative Employment Programme, which provides local apprentices for local young people, is a good example. We encourage organisations involved with us to enable local enterprise opportunities as much as possible.

Westbank, which was selected from a shortlist of seven organisations and individuals to take over the venue, has embraced all aspects of our philosophy.

This latest addition to the estate is incredibly positive for the area. Over the next 15 years our ambitious improvement programme, through sensitive design, will provide more retail and trader space; create a dramatically enhanced public realm; and deliver more exciting enterprise opportunities like this one that our community can be proud of.

ARTISTIC FLAIR: The creative operators of the West Bank Gallery will drive a new project with Westway Trust.

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Serving the Heart of London

■ WET, WET WET! Youngsters enjoy thewater play installation at the newly refurbished Horseferry Playground.

Play area with a history lesson

THE Royal Parks has unveiled its newest playground project following a major £390,000 investment along the River Thames.

The newly named Horseferry Playground in Victoria Tower Gardens was reopened following extensive improvement work which has not only seen new equipment installed but a touch of history brought to life for children.

Created in 1923, the playground originally consisted of a large sandpit funded by paper merchant and local philanthropist Henry Spicer. His vision was to provide an exciting and safe area for children, especially those from poorer neighbourhoods, to play and socialise together.

Prior to refurbishment the uninspiring playground had been untouched for decades and only featured a pair of swings and a narrow slide. Following a consultation with the local community, phase one of the project delivered significant improvements including the reintroduction of a sandpit, new swings, a wider slide, dance chimes, and a water play installation designed to represent the River Thames.

With phase two now complete the playground has been extended, and further additions includes timber horse sculptures, little houses, additional seating and a refreshment kiosk. Metal railings, which separate the playground from the newly refurbished toilets, have been designed by artist Chris Campbell and are based around a River Thames theme. They depict events such as The Great Fire of London and Lord Nelson's Funeral Barge, and includes views of the River Thames where landmarks such as St Paul's Cathedral and The Shard are visible.

The Spicer Memorial constructed in the 1920s, to commemorate Henry Spicer's generous gift to the children of the area, has also been refurbished and relocated to the northern end of the playground.

Nestling in the shadow of the Palace of Westminster, the Victoria Tower Gardens has also recently seen the opening of the new Parliamentary Education Centre, which hopes to teach about 100,000 school children a year about parliament, democracy and political history.

Mark Wasilewski, Park Manager at St James's Park said: "For many, Victoria Tower Gardens is synonymous with freedom, as it is home to memorials that represent liberation such as Emmeline Pankhurst's statue. "For children, playgrounds represent freedom, the freedom to explore, use their imagination, make friends and just have fun. In a world where computer games and the internet are vying for children's attention, interesting, high quality playgrounds are more important than ever."

This is the latest play project to be completed by the Royal Parks in the last five years which has also seen five of its other parks benefit from improvements.

Contemporary and innovative playgrounds have also been installed in The Regent's, Greenwich and Hyde Parks, and the upgrading of playgrounds has taken place in Bushy and Richmond Parks.

To celebrate the opening of the Horseferry Playground, which was funded by The Royal Parks, The London Marathon Charitable Trust, City of Westminster and Phab, a series of events have been organised by TRP's Community and Engagement Team through the rest of this year. More information can be found on the Royal Parks website.

■ SOUND MOVE: This activity features dance chimes that represent Big Ben.

■ TRADITIONAL FAVOURITES: The new sandpit and slide at the Horseferry Playground.

Cunning fraudsters jailed

TWO men who conned more than a quarter of a million pounds out their victims with a courier fraud scam have been jailed at Southwark Crown Court.

Both men had previously pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit fraud – covering 27 offences committed over a ten-week period between August 13 2014 and October 22 2014, targeting victims who were elderly or otherwise vulnerable.

Abdul Mohib, 23 of Frederick Street, Bloomsbury, was sentenced to three years and eight months imprisonment.

Mominur Rahman, 19, of no fixed abode, was sentenced to 12 months imprisonment.

The sentence follows an investigation – named Operation Juventus – by officers from the Westminster Borough's Serious Acquisitive Crime Unit into a series of linked offences that had been committed across London boroughs including Westminster, Camden, Kensington and Chelsea, City of London, Lambeth and Richmond-upon-Thames.

Victims were contacted on their landline telephones by a man claiming to be a police officer named Robert Bain. He would convince victims that there had been fraudulent activity on their bank accounts and ask for their assistance with the police investigation.

To reassure victims that the call was genuine, the bogus officer suggested that they hang up and ring their bank or the police back straight away, but the fraudster would not disconnect the call. Despite dialling legitimate phone numbers other fraudsters would then pose as bank officials or police operators and pretend to answer the call and verify the bogus officer's story.

The suspects would convince victims that corrupt employees at banks, currency exchange shops and high-end jewellers were involved. They pressured the victims to assist the bogus police investigation by going to these venues and withdrawing large quantities of cash or purchasing foreign currency and expensive watches.

Having obtained the victims' banking information the suspects would move money between a victim's accounts to trick them into believing police had given them money to withdraw or spend as the bogus officer instructed.

■ CONMEN: Mominur Rahman, left, 19, and Abdul Mohib, 23, were jailed following their callous deception of elderly and vulnerable victims.

Victims were told to keep what they were doing secret and coached to prepare cover stories in case they were questioned about their withdrawals or purchases. Once victims had obtained the cash or items, suspects collected it from them.

On one occasion, a 68-year-old victim was convinced to hand over £8,500 whilst at the funeral of a friend. Other victims were targeted repeatedly over a number of days, with one 85-year-old victim giving the suspects £28,250 over a three-day period.

In October 2014, Rahman was detained after going to a victim's address to collect £3,000. Mohib was arrested shortly afterwards. Officers found mobile phones used to contact victims in Mohib's bedroom. Images found on a phone and a tablet computer contained some of the victims' personal and account information. A gold Rolex watch worth £20,850 taken from an 80-year-old victim in September 2014 was recovered from a chest of drawers.

Mohib and Rahman were charged on October 23 last year.

Detective Constable Will Richards, from Westminster Borough's Serious Acquisitive Crime Unit, said: "This is a particularly unpleasant version of the courier fraud scam that exploits its victims' sense of public duty and preparedness to go to extraordinary lengths to help the police. Beyond their significant financial losses, these offences undermine victims' self-confidence and trust in others. Many were left feeling vulnerable and humiliated. This was a cruel and cunning scam, and the only people who should feel humiliated by it are those responsible.

"These crimes were clearly well planned and practised. Abdul Mohib kept victims on the phone for several hours and did his best to prevent them from discussing what was happening with their families.

"He was careful to weave genuine information and police jargon into his conversations. He provided victims with contact details and reference numbers; even inviting some to attend bogus court hearings at Southwark Crown Court.

"I hope that today's result will increase public awareness of this type of crime. I would encourage anyone who receives an unsolicited call from someone purporting to be a police officer or bank employee to be wary and be sure to obtain the caller's full details.

"Make sure their call has been disconnected by waiting at least five minutes before calling back on an official telephone number and listen for the dial tone. Do not hand over any money or items purchased as a result of this type of call."

From Fulham to a world of horror, Caroline has bestseller in her grasp

BY PAUL LAGAN

MOVE over Stephen King, there is a new horror writer on the block and she's a Fulham girl through and through.

Caroline Sztaba has just produced her first horror novel *Nephilim Rising*, and she is convinced, that like *Tales from the Book of Magic*, her collection of short stories about the dark arts, which went to No 1 in the Kindle downloads chart, *Nephilim Rising* will also be a bestseller.

"*Tales from the Book of Magic* is in a similar style to the TV series *Tales of the Unexpected*, where there is always a twist at the end," Caroline tells me at the book launch at the Chelsea Pensioner pub in the Fulham Road.

"They are for people aged 15 and upwards; it's real hardcore, but it's been No1 in the Amazon Kindle downloads for young teens in the occult section, so they seem to like it. The youngsters really like short stories.

"But the novel *Nephilim Rising* is definitely for the 18plus category.

"*Nephilim Rising* is my first attempt at a novel and I'm quite nervous about it, it's quite different to the short stories. Graeme Parker, my publisher at Kensington Gore, said that short stories are harder to do, but I don't find that's the case at all. I do get into it."

So, what are we to expect from *Nephilim Rising*?

"It's all about half Angels, half humans called Nephilims," she said. "When God sent the Flood it was to destroy the Nephilim. They were born of angel and human women and were giants. They aren't nice at all –they killed and ate people and were horrible. So God unleashed the flood to get rid of them. But some of them escaped. The book is about the bloodline that survived. But now they are much-changed and look like ordinary people but have powers.

"The book is based in the modern day and is about a girl who has a half-brother but doesn't know he is a Nephilim or that she too is one. She moves in with him and then all hell breaks loose – literarily. They are massive battle between good and fallen angels – it's horrific."

Caroline believes in the occult and that has informed all her writings.

"I have seen ghosts," she admits. "My sister Izzy has also seen them, my husband Steve has seen them and I've seen them."

So where in the world was this apparition from the Other Side?

"It was in the old house I used to live in – in Strode Road. It's in Fulham Cross. I could see my old school Fulham Cross Girls' School from the back yard. It's also a stone's throw from Fulham Palace Road Cemetery.

"An old boy died there," she said. "Things used to move round the house – it was creepy but I

■ Caroline Sztaba looks destined for further success.

was young and just accepted it as normal I suppose. One day, in the 1970s, my sister conducted a seance in the house and something came. The candles were blown out which was followed by the windows – which had been shut.

"Ever since then more things happened in the house. We moved when I was 14 and psychic happenings have followed me. Izzy and I are psychically-linked. I know what playing card she is holding, for instance. We have a deep connection. We are very close and are highly tuned into the other dimensions. I can use the tarot cards. There are ghosts out there in Fulham, definitely."

Perhaps her writings have been given a boost from entities from another dimension, because Caroline admits she has no idea where the mysterious twist and turns come from.

"*Nephilim Rising* has had so much research gone into it – people will get a sense of the realism, and that's what I'm after," she said.

"Graeme has improved me as a writer by coaxing me into expanding my characters. But sometimes I have no idea what is going to happen – it's like I'm being guided somehow. I sit there, at the computer and I'm typing, for instance a man walks to the corner of the street. Now, I don't even know what's around the corner. I suppose I write what I think a reader will want to find round that corner or maybe something else is telling me, I don't know, but it seems to work."

Clearly tales of ghosts and the mystical are deeply-rooted in Caroline's memories, but how did she get into horror?

"I have read a lot of works by Shaun David Hutchinson, Graham Masterton and James Herbert. I quite like Stephen King but only his earlier work.

"I love Hammer House of Horror films, they are my favourites. I've loved horror since I was a kid. Izzy used to read horror books all the time and I used to draw horror pictures as well."

But Caroline reveals that her writing career is not all dark any mystical – in fact she's so talented, she is also an acclaimed illustrator and author of children's books.

"I also have my children's books which I write under a different name – Caroline Mabey – which I also illustrate," she said. "The main character is a lovable and cheeky dog called Rufus and he has become a brand in his own right. I have greeting cards and all sorts of merchandise as well as books with him.

"I have been writing since my 20s. I started writing the children's books when my son Grant was born. I was 21. I've based one of my kids' books characters on him – Bertie.

"The children's books are about Rufus and his friends and all the scrapes they get up to. In the first series of books, Rufus was Bertie's little dog. I sold 180,000 of those books to the Co-operative Society. People loved them. But I then put Bertie and Rufus under the bed. Bringing up a child was all-consuming and there they stayed for 20 years. I then met my now-husband Steve 11 years ago and we decided that we should try and bring the characters from under the bed, dust them off and give them the life they deserved.

"I now have a great publisher and agent in the USA and they are pushing Rufus and Friends at licensing Expos. There is a lot of interest and so hopefully I could have some really exciting news very soon about my children's books.

"But while I was producing the children's books, I was also writing the horror short stores – that has never left me.

"In 1986 I got the books published online in the very early days of the Internet. I thought that was fantastic, seeing my work published. Then I got a publishing deal in America. I was delighted to hook up with publisher Graeme and the Kensington Gore publishing label.

"My husband Steve contacted Graeme in April this year and I can't believe how quickly we have got to this point. We are doing well online through Amazon Kindle and e-readers but lots of people want to have an actual hard copy in their hands.

"I too much prefer to read books made of paper. There is nothing like the smell of a new book. I'm sure that is the case with many readers. Computers are for work, but books are for pleasure. I'll write my notes downs on paper. I've got a temp covering me at work at the moment and I've had to ensue I've taken my notes as they can be quite horrific and I don't want her to be scared, as they are all items on torture and murder. I can just imagine that poor girl reading them and thinking 'What the hell of a place am I working in?'"

Caroline works in the communications department at Chelsea Football Club, in the Fulham Road.

But football and its rules are still a mystery to her.

"I still don't understand the offside rule. And in my first week on the job I called Terry Venables Keith as I though he was a BT engineer. I'm much better now.

"All my bosses have been really great and supportive and have wished me well with the books," she said. "Jose Mourinho knows about the books and I have produced some cartoons for him. Every time there was a Chelsea story in the *Fulham Chronicle* I'd do a little cartoon to illustrate it.

"I have drawn cartoons for the Chelsea magazine in the past as well. There are a lot of talented people at Chelsea who don't necessarily use those gifts in their everyday job there. There is a girl who is an exceptional cake-maker, for instance – highly skilled and professional. There is another who is a fantastic photographer, so the club attracts creative people and I think that's why it is so successful."

Caroline, who now lives in Munster Road, has great affection for ghostly Fulham.

"I have lived in Fulham all my life, I'm a Fulham girl through and through," she confesses.

"Even when I was at St John Lillie Primary School I used to tell horror stories. I used to have ghost parties with the other kids. I do a really good witchy laugh."

Will there be a return to the

iconic characters in *Nephilim Rising?*

"The book has a great ending but I've left open the possibility of a second book. If people want it, I will write it. I even have a great character I'm keen to introduce into it."

Caroline already has another novel written and is keen to let a select few people have a look at it and give her some feedback. Some already have.

"I've actually just finished my second novel," she said. "People want me to add some more murders into it, so I'm having a bit of a think about that. It's more of a crime thriller but definitely has an overtone of the supernatural about it. People seem to like murders.

"Also I have added a few characters of people that I know. Obviously names have changed but they know who they are and are happy to be in it.

"One of my friends has stipulated they want to be murder victim number two. It's based in Southampton in the 1980s. There is a great deal of authentic local language in it – that has given my editor a bit of a headache. I've complied a glossary of terms so they know what I'm talking about."

What's the best place to get *Nephilim Rising*, then?

"As far as getting the books into book stores, it's a bit of a Catch-22 situation," said Caroline.

"Many shops only want to take on well-known authors but we are plugging away and getting the name out there. All my children's books under my Caroline Mabey authorship are in the major chains like Waterstones and WHSmith – they love Rufus. But the horror books are gaining momentum. It's important that those chains now know that Caroline Mabey and CS Sztaba are one and the same."

To buy Caroline's books, go to Amazon, the Facebook page and on the Kensington Gore website at *www.kensingtongorepublishing.com*

COMPETITION

■ We have a copy of **Nephilim Rising** and two copies of **Tales from the Book of Dark Magic** to give away to three lucky readers.

To have a chance of winning, answer this question correctly. Where did Caroline see a ghost?

Send your answer, including your name address and telephone number, to: Paul Lagan, South London Press, 23 Streatham High Road, Streatham, London SE16 1DS. Closing date for entries: September 3, 2015.

Top achievers with a capital A

■ SUCCESS: A-level scholars Mairead Watson, 18, left, and Raluca Vasile, 19, from Phoenix High School, Hammersmith, celebrate their exam success.

● By **GEOFF BAKER**
geoff@londonweeklynews.co.uk

STUDENTS from Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea schools are celebrating after the GCSE results were announced last week – with one pupil winning 12 A*s.

At Holland Park School there were some excellent results across every subject and more students achieving the very highest grades than ever before.

The proportion of students that gained the prestigious English Baccalaureate (C or above in English, mathematics, science, history or geography and a language) was 62 per cent, almost 20 per cent higher than last year, a figure more normally associated with a selective or private school. 73 per cent of students gained five A* to C grades, including English and mathematics and 70 per cent of all grades were A*- B.

Amongst some exceptional individual results Edisher Kipiani gained 12 A*s, and an A in AS mathematics one year early.

Commenting on the results, head teacher Colin Hall, said: "I am, as ever, immensely proud of the achievements being celebrated today. Staff and students have worked hard and it is a pleasure to see their collaborative efforts rewarded."

Students at Chelsea Academy were celebrating just the second set of GCSE results for the school which opened in 2009.

There were some outstanding results in further mathematics and French with 100 per cent of students getting A* to C in both subjects. 63 per cent of students achieved five A* to C grades including English and mathematics. 83 per cent of students achieved A* to C grades in both science and computing. There was success in languages as well where 96 per cent of students achieved A* - C in Spanish.

Notable performances included:

■ Drilon Ferra with ten A* and four A grades

■ Tatjana Radivoj with 12 A* grades and one A grade

■ Drenusha Gashi with nine A* and five A grades

■ Rebecca Dawson with eight A* and five A grades

Matt Williams, Principal of Chelsea Academy, said: "I am really pleased with the strong set of GCSE marks obtained by our students. In a time of increased scrutiny of written examinations and changes to assessment structures, it is great to see that the hard work and dedication of staff and students has resulted in some excellent results.

"Our Modern Foreign Languages department has produced exceptional GCSE and A-level results and I am delighted that our science specialism continues to produce significantly positive grades. It is pleasing that so many department areas have improved on their results from a year ago and it shows that our broad curriculum offer will ensure success in science, the arts, humanities or languages.

"With our strong A-level results last week and GCSE results today I must congratulate all of our students and say thank you to our talented staff for the support and encouragement they give on a daily basis."

At Sion-Manning School Rama Abubaker achieved 11 GCSE A/A* grades and she will now move to Holland Park School's sixth form to study A levels. Rama was one of seventeen students who achieved over ten GCSEs at the highest grades. The majority of these students will be staying on at Sion Manning's sixth form at St Charles.

■ STAR TURN: Student Rama Abubaker savours success.

Fifty three per cent of the school's students achieved A* to C including English and mathematics.

Head teacher, Paul Kehoe, said "After a difficult year with significant changes in leadership and governance we have managed to stabilise our GCSE results and we are looking forward to further improvements next academic year."

At St Thomas More Language College 59 per cent of students achieved five A* to C grades including English and mathematics.

Commenting on the results, head teacher Dr Trevor Papworth, said: "The school is particularly pleased to see a number of excellent individual performances in the GCSE results. Students really lived out our motto in striving for excellence in everything they did with their time here at St Thomas More Language College."

Cardinal Vaughan Memorial School enjoyed another fine year with 82 per cent of pupils achieving five or more GCSEs graded A* to C, including English and mathematics. Headmaster, Paul Stubbings, said: "This has been a momentous year for Cardinal Vaughan, one in which the performance of our pupils in public examinations once again outstrips national averages. Congratulations to all concerned."

Councillor Emma Will, the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea's Cabinet Member for Education, said: "Congratulations to all our GCSE students on some really good results. Clearly we have some exceptional individual performances to celebrate. I would like to thank teachers across the borough for all their hard work and wish them well for next year's efforts."

■ A-TEAM: Fatima Sharif, 18, left, and Lakshmi Magon, 18, A-level students from Burlington Danes Academy.

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FOR RESIDENTS AND VISITORS

London WEEKLY News

ISSUE 39 | PICK UP A FREE COPY | Thursday, August 27th 2015

All of us have a role protecting royals' privacy

DISMAYED: The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge are concerned about intrusive media attention. Picture: REX/ Shutterstock

By Geoff Baker

THE Americans have a good word for them – pedorazzi.

That is the deliberate term of abuse for the swarm [yep, that was deliberate too] of invasive, insensitive and almost-universally detested photographers who have alarmed and infuriated the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge by their harrying of Prince George in the hope of snapping an exclusive shot for those readers of way-down-market, mainly-foreign magazines and websites who, let's be honest, have to be somewhat thick or suspect to feel that they have the divine right of trollish intrusion into the life of an infant whom they will never know nor are ever likely to meet.

In their recent open letter to the press and public on the constant nightmare of dealing with the pedorazzi – a term coined by actresses Kirsten Stewart and Halle Berry after their own daily run-ins with the hoodie snappers who hunt their Hollywood children – the Duke and Duchess were wise to point the finger of blame not just at, but beyond the photographers themselves, and to include the readers of the magazines which publish such seedy voyeurism.

It was a brave move as those readers will not like it, being outed as vicarious weirdos, and one doubts whether even a direct appeal from leading members of the Royal Family will have much effect on deterring their feral craving to pry.

But they, the readers, are of course the problem; without

TURN TO PAGE 14

WAVE OF CONCERN: Prince William and son George have faced new paparazzi intrusion Picture: REX/ Shutterstock

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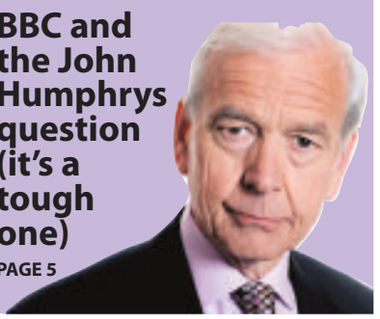
Remember the day when you met the Queen?

PAGE 3

BBC and the John Humphrys question (it's a tough one)



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ROYAL LONDON

Even this family has right to privacy

FROM PAGE 13

'Any young mother must be protected'

their demand there would be no supply and as long as there are enough of them to make a profit for dodgy publishers, the practice, like the publication of pornography, will continue. The demand is the motor in this long-running saga and appealing to the better nature of people who quite probably have no such nature will achieve little.

Because the demand exists, little is going to stop the pedorazzi either. It's like appealing to slaughterhouse workers to give up their work because of the obvious moral issues involved in that horrendous trade. They will just say they are doing their job.

But as the Kensington Palace press office admirably, but optimistically, attempts to diminish demand through its call for public debate on this important matter – a debate which may lead to a proposal in the next Queen's Speech for more sophisticated privacy laws – those in the front line, the Duke and Duchess and their security squads, could turn to new James Bond-style technology which could stuff the pedorazzi.

As the famous grow increasingly irritated by the plague of paps/peds photographing their children, a little-known industry is growing with the aim of inventing technology that will help secure their privacy.

Two American inventors recently patented a device that could stop people from taking a picture without permission. The gadget, not yet in the shops, is likely to have huge appeal to celebrities.

The patent, filed by Keelo Lamance Jackson Jr., and Wilbert Leon Smith, is for a handheld device that uses a combination of techniques to intentionally obscure unwanted photographs, rendering them all but useless. Jackson and Smith's gadget has a built-in beam of light and is covered with reflective surfaces.

"Essentially functioning as a slave flash, whenever a flash fires in your direction, it'll blast light back, horribly over-exposing the image and keeping your privacy," said the editors of the photography website Imaging Source.

Privacy-seekers are also very interested in work at the College of Computing in Georgia, USA, where a team has developed a gadget that can detect the presence of a digital camera or camcorder and keep it from capturing usable images.

The College of Computing has created a system which combines methods of detecting a stills or video camera and the means to automatically prevent it from taking pictures in one new 'toy', which uses infrared light to spot cameras.

To block the camera from taking pictures, the device uses a projector that emits a narrow beam of white light directly at it. The beam saturates the camera with varying intensities of light, forcing its electronics to constantly adjust, and ultimately producing large white splotches that cover about one-third of the recorded image, resulting in a low-quality recording or photograph which won't be worth a euro to the picture editor of Low Life International.

Boffins are now working on making a pap-blocking gadget as small as possible, so that it can be unobtrusively fitted as a badge to a hat or to fit on the lapel of the suits of the famous and their security teams.

For the lowdown on this new technology, the Cambridges need only to hop over the fence and knock on the door of their neighbour Ivan Abramovich at his mansion in Kensington Palace Gardens.

The Russian billionaire is said to be ahead of the pack in using the latest high-tech to protect his privacy. He has already fitted an anti-paparazzi shield to his 550-ft yacht Eclipse and is thought to have installed the technology at his £90 million London home too.

His privacy force field works by using lasers to sweep the surroundings and when they detect a camera, they fire a bolt of light right at it to obliterate any photograph.

However, if the Duke and Duchess were to use pap-buster kit it may need a change in the law first. The photo magazine *Amateur Photographer* asked a London lawyer about the legalities of destroying photos from afar and in his opinion, "intermeddling with goods belonging to someone else, or altering their condition, is a trespass to goods and would entitle the photographer to claim compensation without having to prove loss."

That legal opinion could of course be argued by our learned friends, who would doubtless point out that a grab-shot of somebody else's child, taken not only without their approval but in the face of their publicly-expressed disapproval, not only does not constitute property but could be widely considered to be theft.

To bolster this, the Cambridges could follow the example of rock stars and patent both themselves and their children. Not only would this strengthen any claim to invasions of privacy, it could also give them greater power to block the pile of souvenir tat which is produced for any anniversary by those wanting to cash in on the royals.

However, there is a more important issue than that raised in the Duke and Duchess's statement on privacy, and it is security.

In their statement on the problem with the pap pests, the Cambridges said: "One recent incident – just last week – was disturbing, but not at all uncommon. A photographer rented a car and parked in a discreet location outside a children's play area. Already concealed by darkened windows, he took the added step of hanging sheets inside the vehicle and created a hide stocked with food and drinks to get him through a full day of surveillance, waiting in hope to capture images of Prince George. Police discovered him lying down in the boot of the vehicle attempting to shoot photos with a long lens through a small gap in his hide."

But what was of greater significance was a second statement, in response to the Palace and from the Met.

In their statement, the police said: "The covert actions of photographers have at times caused concerns during police protection operations when they have been considered a possible security threat. Our role is to maintain security and there is a risk to those who choose to use covert tactics when a police operation is in place.

"At a time when the national security threat level from international terrorism is at severe, all officers are at a heightened level of readiness. Officers involved in the security of protected people are armed and have to constantly assess security risks. Photographers using covert tactics often come to the attention of armed officers who take steps to stop and verify the details of those who raise suspicions. Photographers are potentially putting themselves at risk from armed intervention where our armed officers perceive a risk to the personal safety of their principal, the public and themselves.

"When assessing potential threats armed officers have to make split second decisions regarding their use of force in order to protect their principals, the public and their colleagues."

In other words, if this plague by paps continues, somebody is going to get shot.

Now whilst the knee-jerk reaction from many to a pap getting Tazered or copping a bullet may be "good, serves them right", on the matter of assaults the law is not always oiled by common sense – witness the number of home-owners who are charged after attacking an armed burglar in self defence – and nobody wants to see protection officers in court for doing their job.

However, if Kensington Palace was to change its PR approach to the paps problem it may have more success. Whilst appealing to the sympathy of the public is entirely understandable – and let's face it, if the paps hounded our children as they do Prince George a good many of us would beat them with a big stick – it is not likely to have great success, because the sort of people who delight in devouring the truly intimate moments of the famous are not going to be swayed from their gawking by appeals to their questionable decency.

Also, how are we to know what is the strength of the public response to the appeal? As far as I am aware there is no survey being done, no numbers counted, no petition raised, so what tangible evidence will be provided?

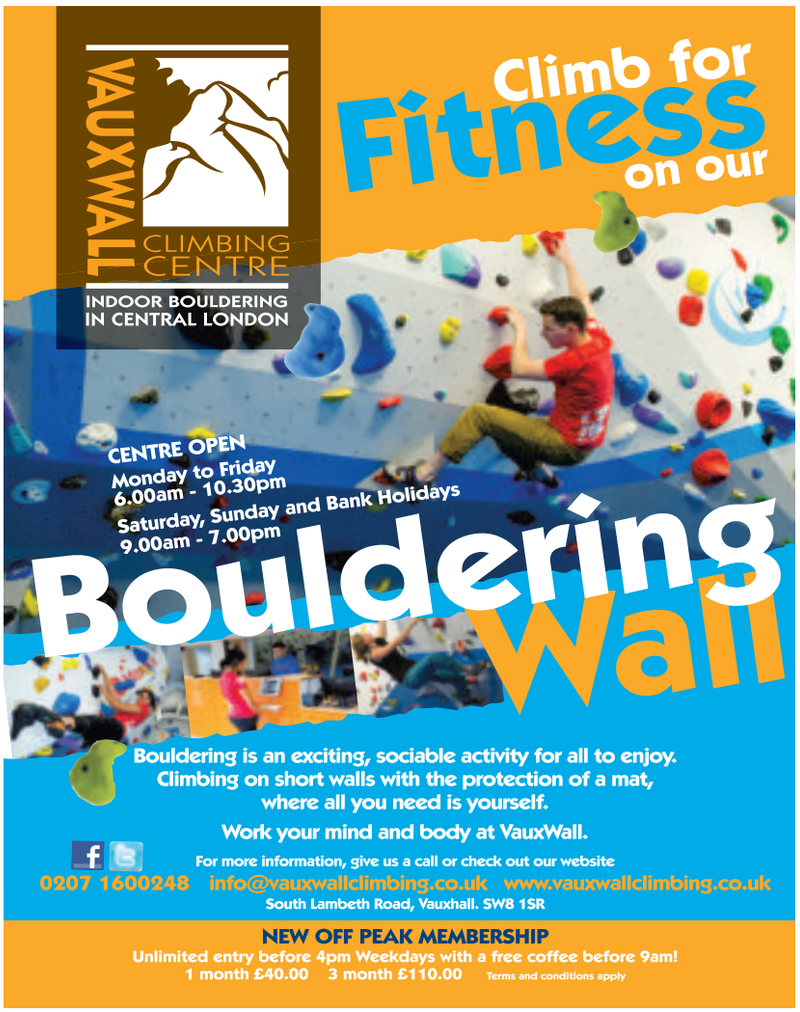
And even if there was evidence, even if a national survey showed that 95% of the public said yes, of course it is wrong to hunt and harry a young mother and her child for the commercial profit that comes from vicarious delight – and it is wrong, it is a brutal bullying – would that stop the minority of couldn't-careless readers from buying these offending magazines?

I doubt it, the nobility of human spirit is not that universal anymore.

But the "that's life" argument is no justification for this young mother to have to continue to endure being daily tormented solely for the entertainment of someone who wants something "juicy" to read with their kebab and chips, and, rather than a privacy plea, a case made for security and the maintenance of public order could have greater effect.

It will be interesting to see, when Parliament resumes, whether any MP or peer has the guts to make a stand on this key issue; the kernel of it is not Catherine's and George's royal status, it is the protection that any young mother deserves to expect for her child.

SMILE PLEASE: The quintessential image of the world's press awaiting the arrival of a celebrity. The debate for those facing the flash guns is what is reasonable?



The most memorable of moments

ROYAL LONDON

We remember meeting the Queen

by Geoff Baker

HAVE you ever met The Queen? If so, the BBC would like to talk to you.

On September 9 Her Majesty marks a royal milestone when she becomes the longest reigning monarch in British history, breaking the record held by her great great grandmother Queen Victoria.

To commemorate the remarkable reign of an unparalleled woman, BBC TV is to make a special film which celebrates The Queen through the memories of those who have met her during the past 63 years of her rule.

The BBC wants to interview those who have shared a majestic moment and is asking for photographs, selfies and any memory of the occasion.

"Have you met the Queen?" asks the BBC on its Have Your Say site. "Did you meet her in 1952 after she became Queen? Or have you met her more recently? Do you share any notable dates with the Queen? Were you born on April 21 1926? Did you get married on 20 November 1947? Whatever your story, share your anecdotes with us. Send us your snaps of when you met the Queen, we'd love to see your photos of your encounter. Did you manage a selfie with the monarch?"

Those who have met The Queen are asked to send their memories of the moment to *haveyoursay@bbc.co.uk*

In the meantime, for those who have yet to have the privilege of the 'Ma'am and Me' experience, here's what people say it feels like.

■ ***Helen Mirren***: "I was terrified. There are certain people who can deal with meeting The Queen, but the vast majority of us get queenitis. You just – you cannot think of anything to say. I am genuinely always astounded by her aura, her twinkle, her presence. It never fails to surprise me and again it's what everyone says when they meet her – it was what overwhelmed me the first time I met her."

■ ***Carla Bruni***: "It was an incredible experience. It was very… exceptional. What happens with the Royal Family is that they're so kind and they make you at ease. They make you feel comfortable. So it wasn't difficult; it was a wonderful experience. I'll never forget it."

■ ***Simon Pegg:*** "I was starstruck by The Queen. I met her at a royal gala performance of the Narnia film I did. I've known her all my life – she's been on every pound I've spent – so to actually meet her in person was quite extraordinary. The most amazing thing about it was seeing her put 3D glasses on. She cried a little bit at the end too when my character makes this life-changing decision – so I think I made the Queen cry."

■ **PLEASED TO MEET YOU, MA'AM: Celebrated actress Helen Mirren and acclaimed broadcaster Sir David Attenborough meet The Queen** Photo David Crump/PA pool

■ ***Kristin Scott Thomas***: "I was so overwhelmed by the whole thing that I turned into a jellified five-year-old and was unable to get a word out. And I'm sure I got the protocol all wrong and curtsied at the wrong moment. She has the most extraordinary aura. When she walked into the room, you really sensed, 'This is The Queen!'

> **Meeting the Queen is the best thing I've done**

What's most impressive is her stamina. It made me think of when, as actors, we're doing a junket or something and whingeing about how exhausting it all is. Well, she spends her whole life doing it!"

■ ***Susannah Leigh*** revealed that when she met The Queen she learnt that Her Majesty liked Elvis Presley. The actress said: "I met her at the premiere of the *Born Free* film. She asked me all about Elvis Presley. I said that Elvis would love to come to England. Later on, I told him that he was going to get an invitation to the Palace, but he didn't get one. So I contacted the Palace and discovered that one had been sent. Apparently it went to his manager, Colonel Parker, who felt that Elvis couldn't travel. So Elvis never got to go to the Palace."

■ ***Sir Paul McCartney***: "She's fabulous, I've got a lot of time for her. She is the rock'n'roll queen. Weirdly enough, that is one of the things her reign will be remembered for. Queen Elizabeth I, we remember Raleigh; Queen Elizabeth II it's gonna be the Beatles. I remember watching her coronation on TV as an impressionable 10-year-old in 1953; to kids of our generation, she was a very attractive young woman, taking on this huge responsibility. She seemed very human. We all felt really proud of her. I'm a big fan."

■ ***Judas Priest singer Rob Halford***: "That was very surreal, going to Buckingham Palace. It was for a music business reception, the first time the Royal Family, The Firm, as it's called, wanted to give a nod to the music industry in general. My mother was more excited about it than anyone else, but it was magical for me, too, because I'm a royalist. I love the royal family, for all its imperfections, but to actually meet The Queen! That was a thrill and a memory I'll always cherish. She asked me, 'Why is heavy metal so loud ?' I said, 'You have to have it loud to bang your head, Your Majesty.' She sniffed at that."

■ ***Miley Cyrus***: "I met The Queen and President Obama when I had to perform for them. It was kind of insane for me to be meeting them. That was kind of crazy. Actually meeting her was scarier than the performance."

■ ***David Cameron:*** "My audiences with Her Majesty last for an hour. It never needs anyone to come and wrap up, the conversation naturally comes to an end. I'm very conscious as prime minister that I'm her twelfth. She started with Winston Churchill. She's heard it all before, but I think prime ministers find it very valuable to try and explain the difficult decisions and problems the country faces in the presence of someone who's heard and seen all these problems before."

■ ***Tony Blair:*** "I have enormous regard and admiration for her. What I found to be her most surprising attribute is how streetwise she is. Frequently, throughout my time as prime minister, I was stunned by her total ability to pick up the public mood. I once asked her to call me Tony. She declined, saying she preferred to address me as Prime Minister."

■ ***Joan Collins***, who plays a Queen Mother in the controversial TV series *The Royals*: "The Queen has always been friendly with me. The last time I met her was at the Palace after a theatrical performance of some students. She loves the theatre. We discussed *Pygmalion*."

■ ***Niall Horan*** of One Direction: "Meeting The Queen was mind-blowing".

■ ***Cheryl Fernandez-Versini:*** "The Queen is so delicate. She has hair like candy floss and tiny little dancing style shoes."

■ ***David Beckham:*** "I spent a beautiful evening at Buckingham Palace, my nan and grandad would have been proud. She is the most amazing woman. I'm a real traditionalist. I'm a real royalist. The fact that I've been able to meet the Queen, that's the best thing I've ever done. She's amazing."

■ Film director ***Steve McQueen*** met The Queen at a reception at Buckingham Palace. Her Majesty, who was given an honorary Bafta following her movie debut as a Bond Girl in the film clip for the London Olympics, told him: "I can't help but look at mine, which I keep on the television."

■ ***Boris Johnson***: On a tour of the Olympic Park Her Majesty told London Mayor Boris Johnson: "It all seemed to go very well last night. But I didn't see my bit." Boris told her: "You were brilliant Ma'am," and she responded: "It was a bit of a laugh."

■ ***Daniel Craig***, who starred alongside The Queen in the legendary Olympics skit: "I think she did fantastically well. It was the best way we could have kicked off the opening ceremony.

"It was quite surreal to be in the Palace acting with The Queen and I was just proud to be a small part of it. It was very relaxed and she was lovely."

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SHOWBIZ SPECIAL

Imagine news show without its head scrutineer...

Today's tough question: could it thrive without Humphrys?

by Geoff Baker

THE greatest news show on the planet has a problem – who can replace "The Tiger"?

That's the dilemma now facing forward planning executives at the BBC as they debate the future of the *Today* programme, the flagship show that sets the nation's news agenda over breakfast every morning.

The Tiger, of course, is *Today's* most senior presenter, the iconic John Humphrys. And although he has given no indication yet that he wants to give up getting up to be in the newsroom at 4am for every shift, the BBC knows that preparations must be made for that day – and it appears to be making them.

Last week Humphrys celebrated his 72nd birthday. In this era of the peppy pensioner it's no great handicap; it puts him at the same age as Mick Jagger and a year younger than Sir Paul McCartney, and they're still rocking.

But even tigers come to the time when they no longer want to be burning bright and the BBC now has to consider its options for when that happens.

Some believe that Humphrys will continue to corner and trap his prey of truth-dodging politicians and stubbornly-on-message spokesmen until 2017, when he will achieve his 30th year with *Today*.

Others think that he could pack it in next year if – and it is an 'if' the size of The Shard – he could go out after achieving his greatest ambition, to interview The Queen.

Her Majesty has never given a press interview, but next year she will mark her 90th birthday and that could provide the milestone moment for the increasingly-open monarch to tell it as she sees it at last.

Royal-watchers believe that the ravens will flee The Tower accompanied by flying pigs and a cow jumping over the moon before that ever happens – not least as Humphrys believes that "nothing should ever be off-limits in an interview" – but that does not stop Britain's No 1 newsman from hoping.

Indeed, during a recent private lunch with The Queen at Buckingham Palace, Humphrys ventured to ask if she might consider an on-the-record chat.

"She said 'No' and 'What's more, if one were to do an interview it would not be with you'," Humphrys told a meeting of The Media Society.

Like most of the nation's thinkers, The Queen listens to *Today* every morning, joining the programme's seven million followers who tune in for the best briefing in the business on what is, or will become, important that day. Like the rest of us, it will be difficult for Her Majesty to imagine buttering the toast without the soundtrack of Humphrys mauling some deluded unfortunate who thinks that he can get the better of the old reporter's rapier-sharp perception.

But if the writing is not yet on the wall for Humphrys, there is certainly some scribbling going on which indicates that change at *Today* is going to come.

The first sign of this came recently when Humphrys' co-anchor Jim Naughtie announced that he was to leave the show after 21 years.

Naughtie has just turned 64, making him considerably younger than Humphrys, but he is leaving *Today* to become a Special Correspondent for the BBC, joining the class of John Simpson and David Dimbleby as the very highest-calibre of its journalists who can be trusted to have the wisdom, insight and experience to cover and commentate on the nation's most important occasions.

Typically, the BBC announced Naughtie's departure with cannon fire of accolades from the top brass.

Tony Hall, Director-General of the BBC, said: "Jim has been the emotional heart of the *Today* programme for a generation. His persistent and incisive questioning has given millions of listeners a greater understanding of the stories of our time. Above all he's a writer and reporter at heart – he can bring to life a vivid scene on the radio better than anyone."

James Harding, Director of News, said: "Jim brings a range of passions and interests, a host of intelligence and understanding to all that he does on the BBC. As a presenter of *Today*, he has illuminated the national conversation on politics and world affairs, the arts and culture for more than 20 years."

And Gwyneth Williams, Controller of BBC Radio 4, added: "Jim has been a leading Radio 4 presenter for as long as I can remember and I want to thank him for his many years on *Today*. Our discerning audience trusts his judgement and we all respond to his inimitable enthusiasm and verve. His is an elegant pen and Jim has made good writing his signature."

All of which praise rather begs the obvious question, if he's so great – which Naughtie undoubtedly is – then why is the BBC letting him leave *Today*?

> **'Is the time looming when The Tiger may have to move over for a Tigger?'**

The answer appears to be that the BBC is quietly making plans for a big shake-up of its flagship show, and for evidence of that we need only to look at the heavy hints dropped in an interview with Naughtie in the BBC's own house magazine, *The Radio Times*, conducted by its own news specialist, *The Media Show* host Steve Hewlett.

"The BBC has had to start thinking about the next generation [of *Today* listeners]", wrote the highly-informed Hewlett. "The conversation about the change may have started many months ago with Naughtie, but many years before that among the BBC hierarchy"

And, referencing the time last year when Naughtie was assigned to step off *Today* to expertly present *Good Morning Scotland* during the Scottish independence referendum, Hewlett added: "That was seen in some quarters as a sign of things to come, that in order to ring the changes at *Today* Naughtie might be the first to move on."

"Ring the changes", "thinking about the next generation", "a sign of things to come", "the first to move on", these are not phrases which inspire confidence that the BBC is not about to dramatically change the sound of *Today* as we know it.

At times the BBC is like the Russian FSB secret service, it is stealth-like in its long planning and its think tanks will have long ago rehearsed for the scenario it faces now – a Government aggressively attempting to clip its wings.

Already the BBC has had to pretend to be happy with the Government dumping on it the £725 million cost of providing free licence fees for the over-75s. Now the Justice Secretary Michael Gove has delivered another kick to its head by suggesting that non-payment of the licence fee should no longer be a criminal offence.

If that proposal goes ahead and the licence fee is made the same sort of matter of conscience as buying a poppy for Remembrance Day, it will spell disaster for the BBC. For whilst it can appeal all it likes to the better nature of viewers and listeners to play the game and pay the fee, those of us on planet Real World know that it's not going to happen; in this get-away-with-it-if-you-can society an awful lot of people will try it on and cost the BBC the loss of many millions in programming budget.

The thinking in one quarter is that, faced with a large anti-BBC grudge inside the Commons that is still smarting from the blasting it got from the Beeb over the MPs' expenses scandal and the Iraq War, plus numerous *Newsnight* and *Today* interviews which have proved various politicians to be less than paragons of genius, the Corporation is going to have to, if not butter up to Parliament, at least take a less-aggressive approach to grilling the elected on behalf of the electorate.

The Tiger of course is unlikely to have much truck with such a soft soaping. In an *Independent* interview about whether *Newsnight* should ease up on politicians in order to stop scaring them from appearing on the programme, he said: "If the price is that you then go easy on them, then I think it's too high a price."

The man for whom nothing is off-limits added: "Interviewing politicians is an important bridge between the electorate and their political leaders; we have to distil the national argument, to represent the voters' concerns.

"The message I get from listeners is that they are distinctly unenthusiastic about the idea that we engage conversationally. If anything I suspect people want more persistence.

"I don't know of any politician – a serious politician in a serious interview – who doesn't want to be pressed. Politicians are fighters, without exception, that's what they do. You don't get to be an MP, let alone a cabinet minister, unless you are tough and willing to fight your corner. There isn't a single politician out there who isn't capable of engaging in this sort of combat and relishing it, otherwise you wouldn't stay in the job."

But with its lifeline licence fee now increasingly under threat, the BBC is clearly having to consider whether it is in its economic best interests to have at its helm an Achilles who can so effortlessly make mincemeat and buffoons of those who sign its cheques, or whether a more emollient *Today* host might suit these unsteady days.

In other words, is the time looming when The Tiger may have to move over for a Tigger?

But the problem with that thinking is that, outside of its populist 'newsy' shows like *The One Show* and *Saturday Live*, the BBC doesn't have many Tiggers in its fold. Its other *Today* hosts – Justin Webb, Sarah Montague, Mishal Husain, Matthew Rice and Naughtie's incoming replacement Nick Robinson – can all deliver a good kicking when required and even the programme's perky occasional sports presenter Sonali Shah is no interview masseuse.

Beyond *Today*, there are few obvious Tiggers either. *The World Tonight's* Ritula Shah is a fearsome prober, as are *The World At One's* Carolyn Quinn, Radio 4 regular Matthew Parris and *Woman's Hour's* Jenni Murray. And woe betide anyone who mistakes Eddie Mair's gentle voice on *PM* for indicating a soft time if you're up to no good.

In fact, if any doves at the BBC do want to bow to political pressure for a *Today* tone-down there's probably only one man for the job – Alan Partridge.

■ BROADCAST NEWS: John Humphrys in the Today studio.

LWN

News for Westminster, Fulham and Chelsea

This monthly column is produced by Peter Faulkner of Who Can You Trust organisation and sponsored by **Checkatrade.com** Peter can be contacted on 07958-475392 or email peterfau67@gmail.com

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On yer bikes robbers are told

By Peter Faulkner

POLICE officers from Westminster and and other parts of London have started a blitz on the rising theft of powered two wheelers (PTW).

In a new crackdown, the campaign aimed at raising awareness among bike owners in Westminster and neigbbouring boroughs was stepped up a gear when officers carried out two days of checks on parked mopeds.

They set up a decoy operations using powered two wheelers and high visibility patrols which were carried out in key hot spots right across the borough.

Officers also handed out leaflets and using the hashtag #secureyourbike tweeted crime messages from their @MPSWestminster twitter account, about keeping PTWs out of criminals hands.

Westminster Police have been assisting in Operation Venice, a London wide operation targeting the theft of PTW.

Westminster Detective Inspector Dave Bolton said: "Officers have been trying to promote vigilance around motorcycle bays and ask that if anyone sees motorcycles being tampered with or being loaded into the back of a van to call 999 immediately.

"We are also engaging with riders and highlighting the importance of securing their vehicles to the ground anchors.

"It is with the assistance of the public that we will challenge these criminals and protect bikes from being stolen.

"We will continue to work with the local authority and other partners to make the City of Westminster a safer place to live and visit."

Officer also approached PTW owners to encourage them to consider additional measures to secure their mopeds and scooters, such as using fitted anchors, security loops, disc and chain locks, and audible alarms.

A typical target for potential thieves

In terms of thefts, there were in excess of 9,900 moped, scooter and motorcycles reported stolen across London in the 12 months from April 2014 to March 2015. This equates to around 27 PTWs being stolen in London every single day.

It is difficult to determine the overall cost of PTW associated crime to victims, but police say that if an average value of £3,000 is applied to each moped, scooter or motorcycle stolen, then the total theft value during the last financial year is more than £28 million pounds.

Criminals steal PTWs to commit other crimes such as other vehicle theft, robbery, serious youth violence, and gang related incidents.

Mobile phone crime and 'snatch' by thieves on bikes/mopeds are also a particular problem in certain areas.

Monthly figures for moped/motorbike associated crimes committed this year are showing an increase, from 241 in January to 392 in June. Intelligence suggests that organised crime groups are targeting new high powered motorbikes which can cost up to £15,000, and be broken down into parts and re-sold.

These are usually stolen by being lifted into the back of vans, the cutting of chains, forcing and breaking of steering locks to wheel away, or sometimes even by using the propulsion of another scooter.

Under Operation Venice during the last few months officers have been conducting targeted operations, mass checks on parked up mopeds, raids on individuals suspected of stealing PTW vehicles or using them to commit crimes.

Around 150 offenders have been identified so far as being heavily involved in PTW associated crime - and these same 150 individuals have been arrested almost 500 times between them over a ten week period between the 20th April and 12th July.

Steps PTW owners can take to reduce the risks of theft:

Parking - choose designated parking with a stand and security loop, or areas with lots of people, good lighting and CCTV

Locks - use more than one lock, focusing on disc locks and chain locks, fitted tight to the bike and through difficult to remove parts

Time - when leaving your bike for a long period or overnight, lock it to something secure and use a motorbike cover.

Attention - use audible alarms to draw unwanted attention to the thieves

Marking - choose to mark your bike parts with the vehicle identification number (VIN) number, your postcode or registration number.

Insurance - some companies will offer discounts on your insurance if you invest in certain security measures.

Secure back wheel of motorbike or moped, rather than front wheel as front wheels are generally easier to remove.

White lines and white lies....Wrong direction....Warning to investors

■TRADING Standards officers in Westminster, Chelsea and Hammersmith will be getting an alert from their Essex colleagues this week about a new and rather unique scam.

The target is not a householder, but churches, schools, surgeries and properties with car parks.

Cold callers have been asking owners if they need white lines painted in their car parks, allegedly claiming they have been working on nearby roadworks and have surplus paint. But the white line offer is nothing but white lies.

The conmen claim to offer bargain rates and quote vague or misleading figures, before reaching an expensive final cost.

In some cases the lines have been painted without permission and the conmen have then demanded money for the work.

So if your premises have car park space be prepared for a visit from the white line traders who will simply leave your bank account in the red.

■HAVE you bought your ticket yet for next month's One Direction concerts at The O2 Arena? If you have then check them.

If not be aware that online fraudsters are selling the e-tickets on Twitter and Facebook for around £50. The tickets have a face value of £65 + service charge and sell for around £200 on secondary websites.

Original tickets are usually photocopied and sold on over and over again by fraudsters. They do this by copying the bar code and make dozens of counterfeit copies which are then sold to other victims.

If you buy one of these tickets you would be refused entry into a venue.

Advice

Always check with the event organiser for official ticket distribution lists and never buy from unauthorised sources

Pay for tickets by credit card as the card issuer is jointly liable for a failure for goods or services to be provided as long as the price of a single ticket is over than £100.

Only make purchase from sites encrypted for payment.

Be on the Lookout for telephone numbers starting 070 or 004470. These can be set-up on the Internet and answered anywhere in the world.

Always check sellers' privacy policy and returns policy.

To report a fraud and receive a police crime reference number, call Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040

■THE Financial Conduct Authority has issued a warning to investors not to deal with a company called Citigroup Investment/Citigroup Implementation Services Limited of Queen Anne's Gate, Westminster.

The FCA said the company claims to be registered by the Financial Services Authority, but is not authorised by them. Citigroup also use an address in Sheerness,Kent.

The FCA is also warning about the activities of Stanley Ball Limited of Hanover Square, Mayfair, because they have cloned the name of the genuine company to try and tempt investors.

If in doubt ring the FCA on 0800 111 6768 (freephone) or 0300 500 8082 before you part with any of your savings.

Handy numbers

Westminster Trading Standards
Tel: 0207-641-1111
tradingstandards@westminster.gov.uk

Kensington & Chelsea TS
Tel: 0207-361-3002
tradingstandards@rbck.gov.uk

Hammersmith & Fulham TS
Tel: 0207-361-3002
tradingstandards@rbck.gov.uk

Citizens Advice
Tel: 03454 04 05 06

Mail Preference Service
Tel: 0845 703 4599
www.mpsonline.org.uk

Telephone Preference Service
Tel: 0845 070 0707
www.tpsonline.org.uk

Action Fraud
Tel: 0300 123 2040
www.actionfraud.police.uk

NEXT MONTH: Exposed - how fakes cost jobs and lives

WINE & DINE

The food and drink page for West London

Fish: keep it simple

FORGET coffee, tea or an icy shower, if there's anything guaranteed to give restaurant owners Mitch Tonks and Mat Prowse a boost in the morning, it's their breakfast grappa.

Since travelling around Europe some years ago, on the hunt for culinary inspiration for their celebrated Seahorse restaurant in Devon, the two friends have continued the boozy morning ritual, which is popular in food markets in Italy and Spain.

"We like our little drink in the morning," says Tonks, laughing.

"It's quite enjoyable," adds the award-winning chef, who fronted Good Food series, Mitch And Matt's Big Fish Recipes, with former rugby star Matt Dawson.

"The secret is, it's only one drink, and for some reason, some days it's better than others. Some days you don't really get it, and other days you get really quite smashed and I'm not sure why."

While the pair's customary drink, which they quaff alongside their morning coffee, has raised a few eyebrows, it's part and parcel of the jovial atmosphere they hope to create in the restaurant, with dancing on tables and musical interludes from their maitre d' Mark Ely encouraged.

"It doesn't really sound like it's a very professional place," says Prowse with a laugh. "It has a life of its own."

Friends since the late Nineties, Tonks and Prowse – whose experience in kitchens began with pot-washing for a local eatery when he was 13 – have just released a new recipe book, aptly named *The Seahorse*, based on the dishes they serve in their restaurant.

And while they are both knee-deep in seafood these days, this wasn't always the case.

"I was working as a head chef at a restaurant in Bath and Mitch came to sell me fish," explains Prowse of how their partnership began.

"He set up his fishmongers there after giving up his previous life as an accountant in London. He came into the restaurant one day, trying to sell me fish, and that was it, we just hit it off. We decided to start running cookery classes."

While he and Tonks, who "wasn't having a great time" as an accountant and quit aged 27, bonded over their love of seafood, they're well aware that many people don't share their enthusiasm for fish.

"It smells. It's full of bone. It's going to stick in your throat and you're going to be dragged to hospital to get rid of it," exclaims Prowse, with a weary sigh.

"Everything you hear about fish, whether it's sustainability or cooking it, is all negative. But it's not. It's an easy thing to cook. Very simply with the sustainability thing, just find yourself a good fishmonger and trust they're doing that bit for you.

"Buy the freshest fish you can find, cook it really simply and you'll have the best meal ever. That's all we do in the restaurant. Sometimes you feel like a fraud because it is so easy, but behind the scenes it's not!"

Fancy trying your hand at some simple fishy dishes? Here is a recipe from The Seahorse to try at home taht will get you started...

■ SEAFOOD ADVOCATES: Matt Prowse and Mitch Tonks.

SEA BASS WITH BRAISED COURGETTES

(Serves four)

100ml plus 1tbsp olive oil
2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
4 courgettes, cut into quarters then cut into 2.5cm chunks
A good handful of basil, roughly torn
4 sea bass fillets, about 180-200g each, skin on
1 lemon
Salt and ground white pepper
1 lemon, cut into wedges, to serve

Preheat the oven to 200C/Gas 6.

Heat the 100ml of olive oil in a saucepan over a medium heat. Add the garlic and sweat for a minute without colouring. Next, add the courgettes and basil, then season with salt and white pepper and mix well. Cook the courgettes for about 15 minutes, stirring regularly until most of the water from the courgettes has evaporated and they have stewed down, leaving some in chunks and some completely broken down. Take off the heat and set aside.

Heat a large ovenproof frying pan with the tablespoon of olive oil over a medium heat. Place the sea bass in the pan skin-side down, season with a little salt and cook for about 12 minutes until the sea bass skin starts to take some colour and begins to crisp.

Carefully turn the fillets over and place the pan into the oven and roast for about five minutes, or until the flesh turns white and flakes easily.

To serve, reheat the courgettes over a low heat until they are just warm. Add a good squeeze of lemon and put a generous spoonful onto each warmed plate. Put the sea bass on top and serve with a lemon wedge.

■ TUCK IN: Sea bass with braised courgettes.

MARK HIX'S RECIPE OF THE WEEK

Pigeon and blueberry salad

SERVES 4

WE are now knee-deep in the season of the pigeon. They have spent weeks now munching on all the berries the hedgerows have to offer. It is the perfect time to make use of them.

If you can get your hands on little wild blueberries, you will find they are even better for this than their larger, cultivated brethren.

Once you've made this dish, you can take the pigeon bones and boil them for a nice broth for future use.

Two oven-ready pigeons
60-70g butter, softened
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
A small handful of blueberries (about 40-50g)
A few handfuls of small, flavoursome salad leaves and herbs
For the dressing
1tbsp red wine vinegar
½tsp Tewkesbury or Dijon mustard
4tbsp rapeseed oil

Preheat the oven to 240C/gas mark 8, season the pigeon and rub the breasts with butter. Roast for about 12-15 minutes, keeping them pink in the middle, then allow them to rest.

Meanwhile, make the dressing by whisking all of the ingredients together and seasoning to taste.

To serve, remove the breasts from the carcass, cut them into half a dozen slices and remove all of the leg meat and shred it. Arrange the leaves on four serving plates with the pigeon and blueberries, and spoon over the dressing.

■ SEASONAL FAVOURITE: Pigeon and blueberry salad – made to a recipe by Mark Hix.

TALK OF THE TOWN

MUSIC ★ THEATRE ★ REVIEWS

The entertainment scene across London

Welcome back, Mrs Johnstone

AS one sixth of Irish super group The Nolans, Maureen Nolan is no stranger to the stage and this year is once again to play the coveted role of Mrs Johnstone in the Willy Russell Classic musical, *Blood Brothers*.

Nolan, 61, first played the role back in 2005 and was the fourth of her sisters to do so, earning them an entry into the *Guinness Book of World Records*. I spoke to Maureen at her Blackpool home about returning to the role for the tenth year and about what the show means to her.

"I absolutely love it. I saw it 18 times before I was in it and it just struck a chord like it does with so many people. It's got everything. First of all the root of it is the fantastic story by Willy Russell and with that story I don't think you can do wrong. With the fantastic songs it just grabs people and there is something in it that you can relate to."

The story follows the Johnstone twins, separated at birth, and their differing paths through life until their eventual demise. The revival of *Blood Brothers* played for 24 years in the West End with more than 10,000 performances. Maureen played the part for two years in the West End.

She explained: "It just pulls you in and you feel like you love the boys because you feel like you've grown up with them and that makes the ending all the more traumatic."

This tour will open at The New Wimbledon Theatre in September before it again travels the country playing to hardcore fans and newly found followers. Maureen plays the twins' mother, who has the unenviable task of choosing one of her babies to give away in the hope that she can manage to still provide for the rest of her considerable brood. With a plot line that would melt the heart of even the hardiest of theatregoers, I ask Maureen how she manages the emotional roller coaster which the role demands and how she recovers after the performance.

"I remember for quite a while in the West End, as soon as the curtain came down I would be literally shaking. I've learned to absolutely give it my all at the end and go to that horrible place which I have to go to and then just snap out of it quicker. I remember at Leeds Grand watching my sister Bernie and I just remember looking at the faces of the audience. They were all so moved. Every night I remember that and think about the people who will be watching for the first time and enthralled like I was."

■ **Blood Brothers** is at the New Wimbledon Theatre from September 8 to 12

■ **MIXED EMOTIONS: Maureen Nolan as Mrs Johnstone, above with Robbie Scotcher as The Narrator in a previous production of Blood Brothers. Left: the cast in high pirits.**

By NICKY SWEETLAND
LWN Theatre Critic

Mind over matter? Cloud has it covered

MASTER of deduction Colin Cloud will bring his tour to the Leicester Square theatre this autumn following run away successes around the country, *writes Nicky Sweetland.*

The former forensic science student, dubbed by some as the Hipster Sherlock Holmes, will bring his show to the West End for just two nights in October as part of his much anticipated UK tour.

If, like me, you're wondering what a forensic mind-reader is, well, it's someone who can tell what you've had for lunch, where you've been that day, what you do for a living, the car you drive, even your PIN code, just from looking at you! Or so they say.

Colin, *pictured*, mixes both mind magic and brain science and became the runaway success of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in 2014 with 23 sold-out performances and multiple five-star reviews.

He is also about to embark on his first TV series appearance on an NBC and Universal production in America.

■ **Colin Cloud: Forensic Mind-Reader** will play at the Leicester Square theatre on the 28th and 29th October. For more details visit colincloud.com

TALK OF THE TOWN ★ The entertainment scene across London

london Listings

Importance of Being Earnest at the Vaudeville Theatre

To November 7

David Suchet stars as Lady Bracknell in Oscar Wilde's much loved masterpiece. Directed by Adrian Noble, Wilde's superb satire on Victorian manners is one of the funniest plays in the English language – the delightful repartee and hilarious piercing of hypocrisy and pomposity can still make you laugh out loud. Two bachelor friends, the adorable dandy Algernon Moncrieff and the utterly reliable John Worthing JP, lead double lives to court the attentions of the exquisitely desirable Gwendolyn Fairfax and Cecily Cardew. The gallants must then grapple with the riotous consequences of their deceptions, and with the formidable Lady Bracknell. www.importanceofearnest.com

Exhibition of work by artist Irwin Crosthwait at Gray MCA

September 17 to 22

Unseen and redisovered works by the former Canadian war artist, fashion illustrator and modern painter Irwin 'Bud' Crosthwait (1914 – 1981), will go on sale in an unprecedented selling exhibition by Gray MCA in London this September. The exhibition will present the most extensive selection of works by Crosthwait in 45 years, from across Europe and North America, including many works that have never before been on public view. The exhibition will feature a total of more than 60 original works ranging in price from £350-£10,000. Location: Gallery 8, 8 Duke Street St James's London SW1Y 6BN. Opening hours: Thursday 17 September – 9.30am - 8.00pm; Friday 18 September, Saturday 19 September, Sunday 20 September, Monday 21 September, Tuesday 22 September – 9.30am - 6.30pm

Buckingham Palace summer opening

To September 27th

Visit Buckingham Palace, the official London residence of the Queen, this summer. Buckingham Palace is one of the world's few remaining working royal palaces - don't miss the chance to see it. Explore the lavishly furnished State Rooms, containing some of the greatest treasures from the Royal Collection. Highlights include paintings by Rembrandt, Rubens, Vermeer and Poussin, Canaletto and Claude. Sculpture by Canova and Chantrey. Exquisite examples of Sèvres porcelain. Some of the finest English and French furniture in the world.

Sinatra: The Man and His Music at the London Palladium

To October 10th

The iconic music of Frank Sinatra is brought to life at one of the capital's most iconic venues in Sinatra: The Man and His Music at the London Palladium. This multi-media concert, which has the support and endorsement of the singer's family, marks the centenary of Sinatra's birth and features all of his greatest hits including Fly Me To The Moon, New York, New York and My Way. Staged at the West End venue where the legendary entertainer made his 1950 British singing debut, Sinatra: The Man and His Music combines rare and original master recordings with cutting edge technology and never before seen performance footage to celebrate Sinatra's hugely successful music career. Featuring a 24-piece orchestra and a company of 20 dancers.

London Mela

Sunday September 6

The London Mela, Europe's largest outdoor South Asian festival, returns to Gunnersbury Park, Ealing, with a spectacular line-up of live music, dance, visual arts and food from South Asia. Over 70,000 people enjoyed last year's creative triumph and this year the festival is set to be even bigger and better than ever, with Bollywood, urban and classical music, outdoor arts, dance, fashion, sports, a children's area, Tastes of Asia, the London Mela Bazaar, a giant funfair and a spectacular firework finale!

Horrible Histories: Barmy Britain Part 3 at the Garrick Theatre

To September 5

We all want to meet people from history. The trouble is everyone is dead! Will King John be a martyr for the Magna Carta? Party with the Puritans and light up your life with the great fire of London! Clap along with crazy King Charles! Will you see eye to eye with Admiral Nelson? Does the Duke of Wellington get the boot? Vomit with the vile Victorians and make a great escape from the First World War! Starring Neal Foster and Anthony Spargo, it's history with the nasty bits left in! Tickets from £8.75

Hamlet at the Barbican Theatre

To October 31

Directed by Lyndsey Turner and starring Benedict Cumberbatch. Benedict Cumberbatch takes on the title role in Shakespeare's great tragedy. Directed by Lyndsey Turner (Posh, Chimerica) and produced by Sonia Friedman Productions, the Barbican presents an exclusive twelve-week run of this compelling new production in summer 2015.

West London Philatelic Society

September 1

West London Philatelic Society is ten years old in September. Its first meeting of 2015-2016 is on September 1, on the theme of anniversaries. Meetings start at 8pm and are held at The Church Rooms, behind Acton Hill Church, Woodlands Avenue, Acton, London W3 9BU. In general, meetings are on the first Tuesdays of each month, from September to July, unless noted otherwise. They are a small, friendly society, so if you're interested in stamps or postal history why not go along. New members welcome. For more details contact Honorary Secretary Christopher E Oliver on Tel: 020 8940 9833 or e-mail: olivers.of_ham@virgin.net. Web: sites.google.com/site/westlondonphilatelicsociety

This is a FREE listings service for local charitable and community organisations.
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Cost of a ticket could be bad for your Elf

FULL casting has been announced for the musical Elf, which is likely to be a big hit in the West End this Christmas, *writes Nicky Sweetland.*

But amidst all of the excitement a rumble started to reverberate around the theatre-going community when it was announced that top-price tickets for the show would cost a whopping £240.

The production is based on the 2003 film of the same name, which starred Will Ferrell as the child who is adopted by Santa's helpers, only to return to the human world and struggle to fit in. The heart warming and hilarious comedy was a big hit on Broadway and enjoyed a limited but very successful run at the Theatre Royal in Plymouth last year.

The cast will be led by ITV's Superstar winner Ben Forster as Buddy the Elf, alongside former Girls Aloud star Kimberley Walsh, who will play the role of Jovie. The show will open with a glittering charity gala performance on November 5, with proceeds going to the Alzheimer's Society, and will then run throughout the Christmas period.

It was hoped by many that this would be the perfect London Christmas treat this year, but with top tickets for a family of four costing nearly £1,000, most will be priced out of the trip, again leaving the theatre-going community facing criticisms of elitism.

Many West End shows offer a day seat scheme that allows devoted but less wealthy fans to queue at the box office on the day of the show for hugely discounted tickets. I've done this several times and as long as you are prepared to be bothered by early morning beggars who are looking for money for a cuppa, it is well worth doing. As yet however, no such scheme has been announced for Elf.

■ **Elf** will run at the Dominion Theatre from October 24 to January 2

Show many to enjoy!

THE West End will welcome a record number of new British musicals this autumn, thanks to the world's first major season for an improvised musical.

Showstopper! The Improvised Musical plays its first full West End run for a limited 10-week engagement.

Eighty brand new musicals will grace the stage of the Apollo Theatre, each created on the spot by incredible, multi award-winning musical comedy improvisers The Showstoppers. Audience suggestions are transformed instantly into all-singing, all-dancing shows with unpredictable and hilarious results.

Fast, funny and entertaining, the team nightly pull off something incredibly ambitious. They create a real musical from scratch, not just an impro night with songs but a full story with characters you can care about, a live band of incredible musicians, and spontaneous but seamless choreography.

With a BBC Radio Four series and eight years of festivals and touring to their name, The Showstoppers have delighted and astounded audiences around the world with their ingenious, unique blend of comedy, musical theatre and spontaneity.

■ **IMPROVISATION GAME: The Showstoppers will keep audiences on their toes.**

Highlights from previous shows have included *Emotional Baggage* (an apt title for a tale of first class romance at Heathrow Airport, with songs in the style of Sondheim and Abba), *Sweeney Cod* (in which an ambitious fish and chip shop owner falls victim to unrequited love, with a touch of Kander and Ebb alongside the pineapple fritters), and *To Bleed Or Not To Bleed* (a high-stakes opera of communist vampires, channelling Mel Brooks and featuring an undead chorus).

■ **Showstopper! The Improvised Musical** will run at the Apollo Theatre on Shaftesbury Avenue from September 24 to November 29. For more: nimaxtheatres.com

Future looks bright for Street favourite

THIS September actress Nikki Patel will star at the Old Vic theatre as the lead in new play Future Conditional, written by acclaimed playwright Tamsin Oglesby and directed by Matthew Warchus.

Nikki, *pictured*, who started her career 10 years ago in Coronation Street, plays Alia, a young Pakistani refugee who faces the challenge of convincing the system to take lessons from a schoolgirl.

Nikki will make the transition from screen to stage later this year as she leads a new and significant phase for the Old Vic, moving on from artistic director Kevin Spacey to award winning director Warchus.

"I am honoured to be cast in a production directed by Matthew Warchus," she says. "I hope that through this production we will raise the awareness of equality of education for women around the world."

The comedy drama, Future Conditional, will also star actor and comedian Rob Brydon and will run from Tuesday, September 1 to Saturday, October 3.

Nikki is also due to star in new drama The Five, airing on Sky Living in late 2015.

Smith proves to be box office record breaker

SHERIDAN Smith has once again proved her stage popularity, with ticket sales for her latest show breaking box office records.

The new production of *Funny Girl* at the Menier Chocolate Factory has became the theatre's fastest selling show ever, with tickets for the limited run selling out within just a few hours.

The revival of the classic musical, which most famously starred Barbara Streisand, is to play at the intimate venue from November 20 to March 5, with rumours of an extension and possible West End transfer already rife.

The show is loosely based on the life and career of the comedienne Fanny Brice and her stormy relationship with entrepreneur Nicky Arnstein. Streisand shared the Best Actress academy award for the role, which she had previously played on Broadway. With the classic showstopper *Don't Rain on My Parade*, double Olivier award winner Smith is likely to once again show why she is the star everyone wants to see.

The 34-year-old actress achieved critical acclaim for her portrayals in the TV dramas *Mrs Biggs* and *Cilla* as well as being awarded an OBE in the New Year Honours for services to drama. With the sad news of Cilla Black's death and the subsequent rumours of a musical about her life, all eyes will be on Smith as she takes on Fanny Brice, one the most coveted and applauded roles in musical theatre.

POPULAR APPEAL: Sheridan Smith stars in Funny Girl at the Menier Chocolate Factory.

New app may be just the ticket with show fans

A BRAND new way to get tickets for top West End shows has been launched, writes Nicky Sweetland.

Ahead of its American counterparts on Broadway, TodayTix is a mobile ticketing app which uses the latest technology to offer a paperless alternative to the way we would usually book seats.

TodayTix has teamed up with the Adelphi Theatre, a Really Useful Theatres venue (founded by Andrew Lloyd Webber), which was due to start using the app when the hit Broadway musical Kinky Boots started previews on August 21.

Rather than collecting tickets, users will be sent a unique barcode image on their smart phone which the theatre will then scan straight from the mobile device.

The company hopes to roll out the technology across other venues in the West End over the next 12 to 24 months.

Kinky Boots stars Killian Donnelly and Matt Henry in the very British tale of a gentleman's shoe factory. The show, with book by Harvey Fierstein and music by Cyndi Lauper, has taken the US by storm, with both the Broadway production and a nationwide tour.

TodayTix hopes to harness the growing movement towards spontaneous leisure time planning, with tickets being available for the week ahead and up to an hour before showtime. I'm going to be reviewing the app in a few weeks time and will be very interested to see how it works.

The TodayTix app is available for download free of charge for iOS and Android devices via the Apple Store and Google Play.

Love affairs on a wing and prayer

By NICKY SWEETLAND
LWN Theatre Critic

FROM the producers of the sensational production *Birdsong* comes *Flare Path*, which heads to Richmond Theatre for one week only next month.

It stars Leon Ockenden as Peter Kyle, Olivia Hallinan as Patricia Graham and Philip Franks as Squadron Leader Swanson. They will be joined by Alistair Whatley, who recently appeared in *Birdsong* at Richmond Theatre.

Based on its writer Terence Rattigan's experiences as a tail gunner during the Second World War, *Flare Path*, written in 1941, paints an evocative portrait of life in wartime Britain for the life-and-death existence of the RAF bomber crews and their wives and sweethearts who were left awaiting their return.

Philip Franks, best known as Charley in *The Darling Buds of May*, will play the squadron leader. The acclaimed actor is keen to remind me that the TV show which launched the career of Holywood favourite Catherine Zeta Jones was 25 years ago.

Franks is now also lauded for his work as a director, including the recently opened *Dear Lupin*, playing at the Apollo Theatre in the West End and starring BAFTA winner James Fox.

He tells me about *Flare Path*.

"It's set in 1942 during the war. Because Rattigan draws on his own experiences in the RAF it's completely authentic. We had a military adviser in for a couple of days of rehearsals and I think everyone is amazed at how authentic it is. However, it's also about an extraordinary love triangle that could have been written yesterday. It's about people under pressure, people in wartime, the fragility of life and everyday miracles, I suppose."

PILOT: Philip Franks.

Flare Path tells the story of former actress Patricia, the wife of RAF pilot Teddy, whose marriage is tested to the limits by the surprise arrival of Patricia's ex-lover and Hollywood idol Peter Kyle. An unexpected and dangerous mission over Germany puts Patricia at the centre of an emotional conflict as unpredictable as the war in the skies.

Philip explains: "There are a lot of young people facing death and he's a kind of parent figure I suppose. He doesn't fly himself. He feels very strongly for all these people and unfortunately is often in the position of bringing bad news."

This new production of *Flare Path* will be directed by Justin Audibert, who is currently directing *The Jew of Malta* for The Royal Shakespeare Company in Stratford.

Flare Path opens at the Richmond Theatre on September 2

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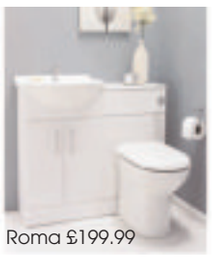
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Local Planning Applications
London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham

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PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS) ACT 1990
I give notice that applications have been made to the Council of the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham as follows:
FOR DEVELOPMENT WHICH MAY AFFECT THE CHARACTER OR APPEARANCE OF A CONSERVATION AREA

Advertisement Hoarding Fronting Blythe Road And Hammersmith Road 2015/03579/ADV
Display of an internally illuminated double sided free standing advertising screens measuring 6m (height) x 3m (width) x 0.4m (depth) in front of Kvaerner House.

18 Queensmill Road SW6 6JS 2015/03810/FUL
Erection of a front roof extension; erection of a rear extension at second floor level over part of the existing back addition; and erection of a rear extension at first floor level over part of the existing back addition, including French doors and a Juliet balcony on the rear elevation at first floor level.

26 North End Crescent W14 8TD 2015/03801/PD56
Change of use of the basement and ground floor levels from retail (Class A1) to no 2 self-contained 1 bedroom dwellings.

103 Wendell Road W12 9SB 2015/03563/FUL
Replacement of existing rear extension; excavation of front garden and part of rear garden to form lightwells, in connection with the creation of a new basement.

22 Ackmar Road SW6 4UP 2015/02738/FUL
Erection of a rear roof extension, involving an increase in the ridge height; erection of a rear extension at second floor level, over part of the existing back addition; erection of a single storey rear extension, to the side and rear of the existing back addition; alteration to roof of back addition to create flat roof at first floor level; installation of two rooflights in the front roofslope.

8 Miller's Court W4 2PF 2015/03864/FUL
Installation of two dormer windows in front roofslope; installation of a glazed sliding roof light at roof level; replace existing folding doors to front elevation at roof level with aluminium doors; replacement of existing sash windows to front and rear elevations at first and second floor levels with new timber sash windows; enlargement of 2 no. existing windows in the side elevation at first and second floor levels with new timber sash windows; installation of new sash window to side elevation at ground floor level; installation of new timber sash window to replace existing garage door to front elevation at ground floor level.

104 Munster Road SW6 5RD 2015/03596/FUL
Erection of a rear roof extension; erection of a rear extension at second floor level, on top of existing back addition; erection of a single storey rear extension, to the side of the existing back addition; excavation of the rear garden to form a lightwell in connection with the enlargement of the basement in connection with the conversion of property from two self contained flats to one three bedroomed self contained flat; one bedroom self contained flat and one two bedroom self contained flat.

Former BBC Television Centre Wood Lane W122015/02646/VAR
Variation of conditions 3, 8, 89 &103 of planning permission 2014/02531/COMB 02.04.15 for Demolition of parts of former BBC Television Centre, associated buildings & structures (including boundary walls) to facilitate comprehensive phased redevelopment of the site to provide up to 943 residential units with a range of land uses. Planning permission is sought in detail for works to the main building comprising erection of new 10 storey Class B1(office) building to replace Stages 4-5 incorporating private members club(sui generis), cinema(Class D2) & restaurant(Class A3), extensions at roof level, ground & basement levels, refurbishment of facades & change of use of parts of the retained building to provide Use Class D2(gym & spa), C1(hotel); C3(residential); A1(shops); A2(financial & professional services) & A3(café/restaurants); erection of new 8-10 storey outer ring building replacing Studios 4-8 including provision of up to 941sqm Class B1 (new BBC offices) next to Studio 3, erection of new 6-9 storey office building with ground floor café(Class A3) to replace the canteen block, erection of new 3-9 storey building replacing former drama block to provide residential use(Class C3) & redevelopment of East Tower to comprise erection of 25-storey building & 3-storey pavilion building to provide residential accommodation (up to 17,670sqm) with provision of up to 1,843 sqm flexible ground floor uses(Classes A1/A3/A4 or B1); provision of car, cycle & motorcycle parking, hard & soft landscaping within new public forecourt & Helios courtyard, new shared pedestrian & vehicular routes, installation of new plant machinery & other structures. Planning permission is sought (with all matters reserved) for the erection of buildings on the multi storey car park site & land rear of the Drama block ranging from 3-10 storeys to provide Class C3 residential; flexible A1-A4 or B1 uses; provision of car parking; hard & soft landscaping; alterations to vehicular & pedestrian routes & access. (REVISED DESCRIPTION)
(The consultation period for this application only, expires on the 4th September 2015).

264 King Street W6 0SP 2015/03885/FUL
Use of the pavement as an outside seating area comprising of 4 tables and 8 chairs.

13 Masbro' Road W14 0LX 2015/03929/FUL
Retention of erection of an additional floor at roof level.

62 Comeragh Road W14 9HR 2015/03932/FUL
Erection of a rear roof extension following the removal of existing dormer window from the rear roofslope; installation of a new rooflight in the front and rear roofslopes; erection of timber balustrades around the flat roof at third floor level to the rear elevation, in connection with its use as a terrace.

Hammersmith Embankment Site Known As 'Fulham Reach' Land Bounded By Chancellor's Road, Distillery Road And Winslow Road, Including Sections Of Thames Path, River Thames,
Frank Banfield Park And Highway Land W62015/03976/ADV
Display of an externally illuminated fascia sign to the existing marketing suite.

150 Bishop's Road SW6 7JG 2015/03764/FUL
Excavation of the front and rear gardens to form lightwells in connection with the enlargement of the existing basement.

39 Tadmor Street W12 8AH 2015/02829/FUL
Erection of a rear extension at second floor level, on top of existing back addition.

13 Tadmor Street W12 8AH 2015/03786/FUL
Erection of a rear roof extension; installation of 3no rooflights in the front roofslope; erection of a part one, part two, part three storey rear extensions at lower ground, upper ground and first floor level; erection of a single storey rear extension to the side of the extended back addition; relocation of existing window to the side of rear back addition and formation of a roof terrace to the rear elevation at upper ground floor level; installation of a new window to the side of single storey back addition; replacement of the existing windows with double glazed windows at first floor level, replacement of the existing entrance door with timber part glazed door at ground floor level to the front elevation; erection of a single storey outbuilding in the rear garden; conversion of the existing property from 2no self-contained flats into 1 x one bedroom and 2 x two bedroom self-contained flats.

794 - 798 Fulham Road SW6 5SL 2015/03847/ADV
Display of an externally illuminated shroud advertisement onto the existing scaffold in front of 794 - 798 Fulham Road for a temporary period of 12 months.

14 Musgrave Crescent SW6 4QD 2015/03831/FUL
Demolition of the existing building and erection of a replacement part one, part three storey plus-basement single family dwellinghouse.

All Saints C Of E Church Church Gate SW6 3LB2015/03819/FUL
Installation of a CCTV camera system including 2no. cameras externally to the west elevation and 2no. cameras externally to the north elevation.

Flat 5 Third Floor 145 Hammersmith Grove W6 0NJ2015/03788/FUL
Erection of a front roof extension with 3no dormer windows; replacement of 3no windows with 2 new windows at third floor level to the rear elevation; installation of 3no rooflights to replace the existing rooflights over the main flat roof at roof level; erection of railings at roof level.

42 Nasmyth Street W6 0HB 2015/03794/FUL
Replacement of existing single glazed windows with new double glazed windows to all elevations at ground and first floor level; replacement of existing single glazed doors with new double glazed doors to the side and rear elevation at ground floor level.

26 Atwood Road W6 0HX 2015/03808/FUL
Replacement of existing single glazed windows with new double glazed windows to all elevations at ground and first floor level; replacement of existing single glazed door with new double glazed door at ground floor level to the side elevation.

22 Bute Gardens And 11-17 Wolverton Gardens W6 7HN 2015/03814/ADV
Display of advertisement hoarding with 5no flagpoles fronting Bute Gardens elevation; display of advertisement hoarding and 3no flagpoles fronting Wolverton Road elevation.

45 Holmead Road SW6 2JD 2015/03818/ADV
Display of 1 x non-illuminated plaque to the front elevation (0.25m x 0.45m)

Flat First And Second Floors 101 Edith Road W14 0TJ2015/03848/VAR
Variation of Condition 6 of planning permission reference: 2015/02467/FUL granted 22nd June 2015 for the "Erection of a rear roof extension; installation of two rooflights in the front roofslope." Amendments to include the replacement of the approved single glazed sliding sash timber framed windows with double glazed sliding sash Rehau Heritage PVCu windows.

742 Fulham Road SW6 5SF 2015/03604/FUL
Conversion from 3no. self-contained flats (2no. one bedroom flats and 1no. four bedroom maisonette) into 4no. self-contained flats (2no. one bedroom flats and 2no. two bedroom flats); erection of a part two, part four storey rear extension at lower ground, ground, first and second floor levels, following the demolition of the existing two storey rear extension; replacement and re-siting of dormer window on rear roof extension; erection of a 1700mm high louvred screen around flat roof at first floor level of proposed two storey rear extension, in connection with use as a roof terrace; installation of French doors on rear elevation at first floor level to provide access to this roof terrace; installation of an obscured glazed window on the south west side elevation at upper ground floor level; and installation of a door and 2no. windows on the north east side elevation at lower ground floor level.

Flat C 128 Askew Road W12 9BL 2015/03881/FUL
Replacement of existing double doors and window of garage at ground floor level to front elevation with new door and sash window for use as a bedroom ancillary to the existing dwelling house, erection of a brick cavity wall to front elevation at ground floor level.

43 North End House Fitzjames Avenue W14 0RT 2015/03891/FUL
Demolition of existing porter's lodge and construction of new single storey porter's lodge, with associated alterations to landscaping.

42 Sterndale Road W14 0HU 2015/03890/FUL
Increase the flat roof and the parapet of the existing back addition at second floor level by 300mm; replace existing sash window to rear elevation at second floor level with a new circular fixed double glazed window.

Bathurst House Australia Road White City Estate W12 7AG 2015/03765/FR3
Replacement of existing single glazed doors and windows with new double glazed PVCu doors and windows.

Brisbane House Australia Road White City Estate W12 7AF 2015/03766/FR3
Replacement of existing single glazed doors and windows with new double glazed PVCu doors and windows.

Draft House 238 Shepherd's Bush Road W6 7NL 2015/03592/ADV
Retention of signage on the flank elevations; retention of a two fascia sign; retention of neon signage at parapet level; display of a projecting sign.

4 Cosmur Close W12 9SF 2015/02708/FUL
Erection of single storey extension to the side of the property; and erection of a single storey rear extension.

16 - 84 Banim Street W6 0DE 2015/03926/FR3
Replacement of all existing single glazed metal windows on all elevations with double glazed PVCu windows; and replacement of all existing single glazed doors on the rear elevations with double glazed PVCu doors.

10 Shepherd's Bush Place W12 8LX 2015/03482/FUL
Removal of existing glazed and flat roof to the back additions and replace with mono-pitch roof; installation of 2x rooflights on to new roof; alteration to the rear elevation at ground floor level including installation of dark grey powered aluminium bi-folding doors.

38 Horder Road SW6 5EE 2015/03824/FUL
Erection of front dormer roof extension.

12 Cresford Road SW6 2AH 2015/03784/FUL
Erection of a single storey extension to the front, side and rear elevation of the property; rebuilding of garden walls; replacement of timber fence panel with a brick wall along the boundary to Cresford Road elevation; installation of a new door to replace the existing window to the rear elevation, replacement of existing windows with new doors and windows to the side elevation at ground floor level.

Westfield London Shopping Centre Ariel Way 2015/03905/FUL
Amendments to the northern elevation of the centre, comprising changes to the existing entrance to the London Underground car park.

27 And 29 Cloncurry Street SW6 6DR 2015/02714/FUL
Erection of single storey extensions to the side of the main building and erection of single storey rear extensions to the side of the existing back additions at no. 27 and 29 Cloncurry Street (Revised description).

Flat 3 445 Fulham Palace Road SW6 6SU 2015/03624/FUL
Erection of an additional floor at roof level and formation of terrace to front elevation at new roof level.

Flat A Basement And Ground Floor 34 Margravine Gardens W6 8RH2015/03254/FUL
Replacement of all existing timber sash windows to front and rear elevations at basement and ground floor level with new single glazed timber sash windows; replace doors to rear elevation at basement and ground floor levels with new single glazed timber doors.

85 Westway W12 0PU 2015/03822/FUL
Erection of a single storey extension to the side and rear of the building; and erection of a front porch.

FOR CONSERVATION AREA CONSENT (DEMOLITION WORK)
FOR LISTED BUILDING CONSENT

10 Shepherd's Bush Place W12 8LX 2015/03483/LBC
Removal of existing glazed and flat roof to the back additions and replace with mono-pitch roof; installation of 2x rooflights on to new roof; alteration to the rear elevation at ground floor level including installation of dark grey powered aluminium bi-folding doors.

49 Orbain Road SW6 7JZ 2015/03863/FUL
Erection of a rear roof extension involving an increase in the ridge height; installation of 2no rooflights in the front roofslope; alterations to the pitch roof of second floor rear back addition to form a flat roof.

FOR DEVELOPMENT WHICH MAY AFFECT THE SETTING OR CONTEXT OF A LISTED BUILDING

Former BBC Television Centre Wood Lane W122015/02646/VAR
Variation of conditions 3, 8, 89 &103 of planning permission 2014/02531/COMB 02.04.15 for Demolition of parts of former BBC Television Centre, associated buildings & structures (including boundary walls) to facilitate comprehensive phased redevelopment of the site to provide up to 943 residential units with a range of land uses. Planning permission is sought in detail for works to the main building comprising erection of new 10 storey Class B1(office) building to replace Stages 4-5 incorporating private members club(sui generis), cinema(Class D2) & restaurant(Class A3), extensions at roof level, ground & basement levels, refurbishment of facades & change of use of parts of the retained building to provide Use Class D2(gym & spa), C1(hotel); C3(residential); A1(shops); A2(financial & professional services) & A3(café/restaurants); erection of new 8-10 storey outer ring building replacing Studios 4-8 including provision of up to 941sqm Class B1 (new BBC offices) next to Studio 3, erection of new 6-9 storey office building with ground floor café(Class A3) to replace the canteen block, erection of new 3-9 storey building replacing former drama block to provide residential use(Class C3) & redevelopment of East Tower to comprise erection of 25-storey building & 3-storey pavilion building to provide residential accommodation (up to 17,670sqm) with provision of up to 1,843 sqm flexible ground floor uses(Classes A1/A3/A4 or B1); provision of car, cycle & motorcycle parking, hard & soft landscaping within new public forecourt & Helios courtyard, new shared pedestrian & vehicular routes, installation of new plant machinery & other structures. Planning permission is sought (with all matters reserved) for the erection of buildings on the multi storey car park site & land rear of the Drama block ranging from 3-10 storeys to provide Class C3 residential; flexible A1-A4 or B1 uses; provision of car parking; hard & soft landscaping; alterations to vehicular & pedestrian routes & access. (REVISED DESCRIPTION)
(The consultation period for this application only, expires on the 4th September 2015).

All Saints C Of E Church Church Gate SW6 3LB2015/03819/FUL
Installation of a CCTV camera system including 2no. cameras externally to the west elevation and 2no. cameras externally to the north elevation.

10 Shepherd's Bush Place W12 8LX 2015/03482/FUL
Removal of existing glazed and flat roof to the back additions and replace with mono-pitch roof; installation of 2x rooflights on to new roof; alteration to the rear elevation at ground floor level including installation of dark grey powered aluminium bi-folding doors.

Anyone who wishes to make representations about these applications should do so by 13th September 2015. See below for ways of commenting on applications

THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE) ORDER 2013
NOTICES UNDER REGULATION 13

13 Dancer Road SW6 4DU 2015/03738/FUL
I give notice that Mr James Johnston is applying to HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM COUNCIL for planning permission to carry out the following development: Erection of an additional floor at roof level; formation of a roof terrace at third floor level to the rear elevation; alterations to the front elevation at second floor level to include installation of new windows to replace the existing window; installation of French doors and Juliet balcony to replace the existing window at second floor level to the rear elevation; replacement of existing widow with new window to the rear elevation, relocation of existing window and part infill extension to the side of rear back addition at first floor level; installation of new doors to replace the existing windows to the rear elevation and installation of new rooflights on the roof of single storey back addition; installation of new door to replace the existing window at ground floor level to the rear elevation; conversion of the first, second and third floor level into 1 x one bedroom and 1 x two bedroom self-contained flats.

187 Askew Road W12 9AX 2015/03571/FUL
I give notice that Mrs Christine, Martina & John Lagna, Luger & Adams is applying to HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM COUNCIL for planning permission to carry out the following development: Erection of a rear roof extension; erection of a single storey rear extension, to the side and rear of the existing back addition; excavation of the front and rear garden to form lightwells in connection with the creation of a new basement; formation of external steps from basement to ground floor level at the front elevation; formation of roof terraces at first floor and third floor level to the rear elevation; installation of a new door to access the roof terrace at third floor level, replacement of existing window with doors at first floor level to the rear elevation; installation of 4no rooflights in the front roofslope; conversion of the basement, ground, first, second and third floor levels to provide 3 x two bedroom and 1 x three bedroom self-contained flats.

27 Chesson Road W14 9QR 2015/03796/FUL
I give notice that Mrs Natasha Kumar is applying to HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM COUNCIL for planning permission to carry out the following development: Erection of a rear extension at first floor level, on top of the existing back addition; erection of a single storey rear extension to the side of the existing back addition; formation of a roof terrace at second floor level to the rear elevation; replacement of existing windows with new doors at ground floor and second floor level to the rear elevation; alterations to the front lightwell; conversion of the existing dwellinghouse into 1 x two bedroom and 1 x three bedroom self-contained flats.

Anyone who wishes to make representations about these applications should do so by **13th September 2015**. See below for ways of commenting on applications.

Signed: **NIGEL PALLACE**
Executive Director for Transport and Technical Services on behalf of HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM COUNCIL

You can view applications, make comments and monitor their progress on our website: www.lbhf.gov.uk/planning. Click on the 'Planning Online' logo on the Planning Home Page.You can also E-mail comments to: plancomments@lbhf.gov.uk
You can also inspect details of applications using computers at our office **RECEPTION FIRST FLOOR HAMMERSMITH TOWN HALL EXTENSION KING STREET W6** between 9.00am and 5.00pm, Monday to Friday, excluding public holidays.
If you want to make comments on applications please E-mail them through our website or post them to **DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT SERVICE ENVIRONMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT TOWN HALL KING STREET W6 9JU** by the date shown above. Please include the application reference number and the name of the planning officer. We will try to consider any representations received after the date indicated but this cannot be guaranteed so please reply promptly. For initial enquiries call our information and reception service on **020 8753 1081 or 020 8753 1082.**

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Send us your comments about planning applications via our website: **www.lbhf.gov.uk/planning**

Hammersmith & Fulham Council

Public Notices

LONDON BOROUGH OF HAMMERSMITH AND FULHAM
ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 SECTION 14(1)
(GONVILLE STREET)
TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC

1. The Council of the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham hereby gives notice that in order to facilitate Thames Water repair works in the above named road, it made an Order the effect of which would prohibit traffic in the above named road.
2. Whilst works are in progress, or whilst the authorised traffic signs are displayed, no person shall cause any vehicle to proceed, stop, wait, load or unload in the westbound lane of Gonville Street.
3. An alternative route for traffic in article 2 would be in place via Fulham High Street and Putney Bridge Approach.
4. Exemptions would be provided in the Order to permit reasonable access to premises, so far as it is practical without interference with the execution of the said work and for works vehicles, any vehicle being used in connection with police, fire or ambulance purposes and anything done with the permission or at the direction of a police constable in uniform.
5. The Order would come into operation on Wednesday, 19th September 2015 and would be valid for a maximum period of 18 months or until works are completed, whichever is the sooner.
6. Works would be expected to commence on Wednesday, 19th September 2015 and last for 3 days. The dates specified are for guidance and informative purposes only and works may extend outside these dates.

Dated this 17th day of August 2015.

Chris Bainbridge
Head of Transport Policy & Network Management
Transport & Technical Services

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South London & MERCURY

Section 17 Licensing Act 2003
Licensing Act 2003: Application for a new Premises Licence

Notice is hereby given that (1) Nathan Lowry Shepherds Market Fine Wine has applied to the City of Westminster on (2) 18th August 2105 for a new premises licence for (3) 21 & 23 Shepherds Market, London W1J 7PN
The proposed application is to permit (4) the provision of regulated entertainment / provision of late night refreshment / for the sale by retail of alcohol.
Any person who wishes to make a representation in relation to this application must give notice in writing of his/her representation by (5) 18th September 2015 stating the grounds for making said representation to: Licensing Service, 14th Floor, City Hall, 64 Victoria Street, London, SW1
The public register where applications are available to be viewed by members of the public can be accessed online by visiting at www.westminster.gov.uk/Licensing and following the link to the public register.
The Licensing Authority must receive representations by the date given above. The Licensing Authority will have regard to any such representation in considering the application. It is an offence, under section 158 of the Licensing Act 2003, to knowingly or recklessly make a false statement in or in connection with an application for premises licence and the maximum fine on being convicted of such an offence is £5000.

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2. 'Classified' Advertisers offering goods or service of a business, commercial or trade nature will, at the discretion of the Publishers, be deemed 'Trade Advertisers', and as such, must include their names in advertisements. A telephone number is an optional addition to these requirements and not an alternative.
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3. The Publishers accept no liability whatsoever for any loss or damage however caused arising out of:
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Austin shines on Stan's day

CHARLIE Austin delivered a timely reminder to would-be suitors of why he was the second best English goalscorer in the Premier League last season with two goals in QPR's 4-2 home victory against Rotherham United on Saturday.

It was also the perfect riposte to West Ham chairman David Sullivan's claim last week that R's biggest asset would be too risky a signing due to his knee problems.

Rotherham sensed no hint of danger when Austin controlled goalkeeper Robert Green's goal-kick on his chest midway in the opposition's half. But the burly No.9 brushed off the challenge of a few defenders as he advanced to the edge of the penalty area and sent another defender the wrong way before his right foot shot squirmed into the net, much to embarrassment of the visiting keeper.

Austin's second was a penalty but he also set up QPR's goal first for Tjaronn Chery by using his strength to hold off his marker and then lay-off a short pass into the Dutchman's path.

While the £15m-rated Austin was no doubt pleased to extend his goal tally to four in four matches at the start of this season, in his heart of hearts he must know that there is much more career satisfaction – not to mention a hefty pay rise – to be gained from scoring against Manchester United than Rotherham United.

QPR's resolve is likely to be severely tested this week as several Premier League clubs weigh up their options. Crystal Palace have emerged as the new favourites to sign the striker who scored 18 top flight goals last season, while Newcastle United and AFC Bournemouth are also being linked with the 26-year-old who has one year left on his contract in SW12.

But it's no longer possible to imagine Austin heading across the capital to West Ham after David Sullivan made (on a fans' podcast) what the QPR striker described as "an outrageous slur" on his professionalism.

Austin responded with a statement, saying: "I feel I have no option but to address the inaccurate, misleading and uninformed innuendo. It is one of a number of inaccurate reports about my so-called injury problems made over the summer.

"For the record, there is nothing wrong with my 'ligaments', as has been suggested.

Match sharpness

"My strength and performance in pre-season has been excellent and with two goals in my last two games I don't think there is any doubt that my match sharpness is as good as ever.

"Like many professional footballers, I have the legacy of injuries picked up over my career but the effect on my day-to-day training and on match day is non-existent.

"I am fit, strong and looking forward to Saturday's home game against Rotherham."

While R's fans are bracing themselves for Austin's anticipated departure before the summer transfer window closes next Tuesday (Sept 1), they are already discovering potential new heroes. Attacking left-footed midfielder Chery underlined his promise by twice popping up in Rotherham's penalty area to score a goal in each half.

■ CHRIS Ramsey dedicated his team's win over Rotherham to Stan Bowles on the day the club celebrated its greatest ever player at Loftus Road.

Head coach Ramsey said: "We want to dedicate that win to Stan Bowles. I think Stan would have been happy with that sort of score.

"Stan Bowles put QPR on the map, let's make no mistake. He's a legend here. Legend is an overused word in football these days but Stan is a 100 per cent legend."

LOFTUS ROAD RANGERS REVIEW
With Tony McDonald

■ BIG-time Charlie: Will Austin make a quick return to the top flight? Pic: Rob Newell/ Digital South

In an industry sadly renowned for greed and cynicism rather than compassion, credit must go to QPR for the manner in which they have respectfully publicly supported Alzheimer's sufferer Bowles and his family, who were their special guests at Loftus Road on Saturday.

Instead of the name of their usual main sponsors, Air Asia, QPR's shirts carried the Alzheimer's Society logo. Each match-worn shirt was signed by the respective player and will be auctioned off over the coming months. The club will reveal full details of the fundraising mechanism in due course.

In the meantime, a GoFundMe page has been set up by Stan Bowles' family, in conjunction with QPR, to provide Rangers fans and the footballing public at large with the chance to show their support for the former R's star.

Since news broke earlier this summer regarding the 66 year-old's ill-health, the outpouring of affection and support for the popular maverick – who made 315 appearances for the Hoops, scoring 97 goals between 1972 and 1979 – has been quite overwhelming.

The Bowles family are encouraging supporters to split their donation between the GoFundMe account – for Stan's daily welfare and ongoing care – and the Just Giving Alzheimer's Society page, supporting the UK's leading dementia support and research charity, to help raise awareness of the condition.

Tracy Bowles, Stan's daughter, said: "Raising awareness of Alzheimer's is so important to the family. We've seen how it can affect a loved one and we want to raise as much money as possible so everyone is fully aware of the condition and the impact it can have."

She added: "QPR is Stanley's club and the support we've had from everyone connected to Rangers and the Trust has been incredible over the last few days.

"There are some basic needs that are essential for Stan and the family in terms of his daily welfare – and working with the trust, we can hopefully improve his quality of day-to-day living and future care.

"I can't thank everyone enough for their support so far – it just goes to show what a wonderful club QPR is."

■ The GoFundMe Stan account website address where you can make a donation is: www.gofundme.com/StanBowles/

FOOTBALL FIXTURES

Saturday, August 29
CHELSEA v Crystal Palace, 3.00
Rotherham Utd v FULHAM, 3.00
Huddersfield Town v QPR, 3.00

County Cricket

Middlesex edge closer

■ MIDDLESEX maintained their hopes of winning the LV= County Championship by forcing a 71-run win against Durham on Monday to close the gap on leaders Yorkshire.

Neil Dexter led the charge for the visitors by making 112 not out in an imposing total of 280 all out at Chester-le-Street. At an impressive strike rate of 79.43, he notched a six and 16 fours off 141 balls.

With the in-form Dawid Malan weighing in with 63, Middlesex left Durham needing 308 for victory but the loss of both openers was a huge setback. They were reduced to 134-5 at the close on Sunday – still 174 runs short of the target.

Despite a battling 95 from Scott Borthwick, Middlesex paceman James Harris took 5-71 as the home side were bowled out for 236 on the final morning.

Having begun the game 38 points behind Division One leaders Yorkshire, who have a game in hand, and having failed to earn any first-innings batting points, victory was vital for Middlesex, who meet the defending champions at Headingley on September 9. Before then, they face Warwickshire in Birmingham from next Tuesday (Sept 1).

Middlesex concluded their Royal London One-Day Cup fixtures with an easy victory over Glamorgan by eight wickets at Lord's, where Malan again starred with 156 not out.

■ BEN Foakes produced his most outstanding batting performance since joining Surrey from Essex at the end of last season to help put his side top of Division Two, one point ahead of Lancashire.

Although their drawn Championship match against Gloucestershire was badly affected by the weather – rain washed out any hope of play on Sunday and Monday – Foakes occupied the crease for five-and-a-half hours to record a brilliant career-best 140 not out for the visitors, who posted a challenging 349-6 in response to the home side's 233 all out.

The 22-year-old's biggest ever haul and his fifth first-class century came in 212 balls and included 19 fours, although credit should also go to 17-year-old Sam Curran who also impressed in their third wicket stand of 113. Curran was annoyed with himself, however, for cutting a wide ball straight into the hands of the fielder at point when just one run short of his maiden first-class 50 in only his third match.

In the One-Day Cup, Surrey lost by three wickets to Somerset at Taunton, where Steve Davies' 111 included 13 fours as Surrey posted 267 all out in the first innings. Rory Burns (76) and Gary Wilson (59) were the only others to give him any support – seven extras was the visitors' fourth highest score.

At Bristol the next day, Surrey wrapped up their ODC campaign by beating Gloucestershire by 12 runs. In a much more solid team performance, Burns top-scored with 95, with Sam Curran (42) and Wilson (37) also among the runs as Surrey posted 291-8 from their full 50 overs.

Gloucestershire lost wickets at regular intervals before being dismissed for 279 with one ball remaining.

Surrey resume their second division Championship title bid action against Derbyshire at The Kia Oval from next Tuesday (Sept 1).

Chelsea see red again

■ Continued from p28

JOSE Mourinho cut a forlorn figure despite seeing his team win their first three points of the season in Sunday's hard-fought 3-2 win at The Hawthorns.

"I felt we deserved to win," he said. "It was difficult but we deserved it."

Mourinho was clearly unhappy about the sending off of John Terry in the second half which reduced his side to 10 men for the second time in three league matches – the first such punishment coming against Swansea on the season's opening day.

But the Portuguese was reluctant to talk about it – or was he?

"I don't want to make a comment about it," he said. "If I do, then I have to speak about many other things in the game – some things people can see and other things we can see. And so many things happened."

In a barely concealed criticism of referee Mark Clattenburg's performance, Mourinho then listed decisions that smacked of inconsistency.

"One striker pushed a defender – it's a foul or it's not a foul," he said. "Referee stops the game in midfield and a foul is a yellow card or not a yellow card. The penalty: he should have given it to us or he lets Azpilicueta shoot. But what if he misses the target? It's not a goal nor a penalty.

Adapted well

"So I prefer just to focus on us. And for us, at 3-1, it was short when 11 v 11. With the chances we created and the spaces we found, and attacked their defensive line, it was short at 3-1. And then with one player less, and we are getting used to it, we adapted well. But they got a goal back and then the game is open.

"But I am happy because we controlled the game well at that point. We had the best chances to score another goal. I am happy with the spirit of the players, they really want to win."

Terry was red-carded by Clattenburg for hauling back Salomon Rondon. Did Mourinho blame Terry? Did he heck.

"No, I don't," he said. "The ball is in space behind the full-back. The full-back is pressing high but their striker makes the movement – and then Mr Clattenburg decides it's a red card."

Mourinho is frustrated about the decision but feels an appeal, while justified, won't go Chelsea's way.

"Normally it's a waste of time for us to appeal," he said, having recently lost his appeal against Thibaut Courtois' dismissal against Swansea. He recalled other examples.

"I think we should appeal but when (Nemanja) Matic got sent off against Burnley last year, it was a waste of time. When (Diego) Costa got sent off against Liverpool, it was a waste of time."

But Mourinho, as pragmatic as ever, knows that these sendings-off can happen at any time and he and his players need to be prepared for it.

"I train 10 against 11," he said. "I'm not joking. We have to do it. We did it already in pre-season in Canada. We have to do more.

"We have to know what to do when it's 10 men when we are winning, 10 men when we are losing, 10 men when we are chasing a result, 10 men when we are defending a result. The difference between the West Brom and Swansea games was exactly that. Against Swansea, we had 10 men but we wanted to change the result into a win. Against West Brom, we were winning and wanted to keep the result. We need to be clear about it, so we do it in training. That is the only thing we can do that's in our hands."

■ CHELSEA Ladies beat London rivals Arsenal 2-0 on Sunday to go three points clear at the top of Women's Super League 1.

An own goal from Gunners' Vicky Losada set the Blues on their way before Gemma Davison slotted home a penalty in the second half to keep them ahead of Sunderland with just three league games left of their season.

Paul Lagan

London Weekly News

SPORT

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■ PULLING power: Cesar Azpilicueta grabs Arsenal's Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain Pic: Rob Newell/Digital South

Spanish pair spark Blues

● By LWN reporter **Paul Lagan**
sport@londonweeklynews.co.uk

CHELSEA got their Premier League title defence up and running at West Bromwich Albion with a win that had its roots in Spain.

Cesar Azpilicueta scored his first league goal for Blues in Sunday's 3-2 win in the West Midlands, where the high level of performance from new boy Pedro brought renewed hope for honours following a disappointing start to the season.

Left-back Azpilicueta, 25, a £6.5m buy from Marseille in August 2012, is facing pressure for his defensive berth by the signing last week of Baba Rahman, so it was not a surprise to see the Spain defender get forward and show boss Jose Mourinho his attacking prowess too.

His goal proved to be the decisive strike in a game littered with defensive errors which saw five goals, a missed West Brom penalty and the sending off of Blues' skipper John Terry.

Chelsea had just one point from two games prior to their visit to The Hawthorns.

Azpilicueta said: "It was important for us to get the win. It was a difficult place to go to and we had a few difficulties in the game. We had to fight until the end."

Fellow Spanish international team-mate Pedro, a £21m purchase from Barcelona in midweek, produced the perfect debut, scoring the opener and setting up number two for Diego Costa. Azpilicueta was not surprised by his compatriot's impact on the game.

Hungry to win

"I know him very well," he said. "And I knew he would fit very well in the team. I know his ambition, he is hungry to help the team and to win trophies. But to start like that in his first game is amazing.

"I know Pedro from the national team and he is a top player. He played for Barcelona for many years and he will fit into the Premier League and our team. He knows a few of the players already and I think he is going to do a really good job."

Pedro has won the World Cup and European Championship with Spain, plus three Champions Leagues, five La Liga tiles and numerous domestic trophies with Barca. Does Azpilicueta think he can get even better?

"Yes he will. He has only trained with us for one week. He has just played his first Premier League game and has already scored, so I'm sure he will get better."

Has he offered him any advice about the Premier League?

"He doesn't need any advice," he said. "He has won so much at international and domestic level, he has all the experience. Of course, there are a few details about playing in England – there are a few differences like the pace and how the opposition always push until the end, especially when they are losing. But honestly, there is not much to say to him. He scores goals, he does everything."

Has the addition of Pedro and Rahman giving the whole squad a lift after their poor start?

"They are both really good additions to the squad. They will help us to become a better team. It will help everybody. We will have more competition and that can only benefit the club.

"We know in football you can't rely on what you did in the past, you have to prove yourself every day. We won the league last season but we have to show that we are ready to perform in every game."

Azpilicueta is naturally a right-back but has also proved a success at left-back and has Mourinho's confidence, to the extent that he has seen off Ashley Cole and Felipe Luis. Now he has Baba after his place. What are his thoughts on that challenge?

"I'm confident that I will keep working and doing my job," he insisted.

"I know that competition is good for the team. There are a lot of great players around me and young players too. They're all going to compete for a place. At the end, hopefully the whole team will be better and I hope to improve.

"I have played more games on the left for Chelsea but I'm always ready to play wherever the manager wants – even in goal! I will let the manager decide."

Pedro scored the opener and just as crucially, set up the second. Mourinho was happy with his £21m signing from Barcelona but he had worked all week preparing the winger for the rigours of the Premier League.

"He is a very good player," said Mourinho, "but there is always a question mark about new players coming into the league from another country. How many top players come to England and don't perform immediately?" he suggested. "Then people are critical and say: 'Oh, was he a bad buy?'. How many of them? We have examples of that at our club and there are lots of examples in other clubs too. So it's very nice for Pedro to come in straight away and to perform the way he did.

"I expected that of him, because he had a good pre-season with Barcelona. He played three competitive matches – two Super Cups against Bilbao and a European Super Cup against Sevilla – so he came to us with good minutes on the pitch, he had intensity. So it was not a question of his condition for us. It was a need to get the right understanding with the players and we worked, tactically, every day with him since he came, for him to try to understand the team and for the team to understand him – what he wants, what he needs – and I think it was a very good performance."

Juan Cuadrado is expected to join Juventus this week on a season-long loan. The former Fiorentina wide man, signed by Blues in February for £26m in a deal that also saw another flop, Mohamed Salah, move to Fiorentina, is in Italy preparing to sign for the Italian champions.

Blues have completed the signing of Brazil under-20 striker Kenedy from Fluminense for an undisclosed fee. The 19-year-old is expected to be farmed out on loan, like most young players signed by the club.

This week at STAMFORD BRIDGE

Focus on Craven Cottage

By TONY McDONALD

Fulham goalie 'out for months'

FULHAM's disappointing start to the season – two points from four league games – got worse with the news that Marcus Bettinelli is expected to be out for months after the keeper suffered knee ligament damage in last week's late 2-1 defeat at Hull.

England Under-21 international Bettinelli raced off his line to close down Hull forward Abel Hernandez and ran into his team-mate Matt Smith, with both players having to be replaced.

Smith also suffered an injury to his medial ligament but manager Kit Symons said: "Matt's is less severe, so we are probably looking at him being out for four to six weeks.

"But Marcus has damaged two ligaments – his MCL and PCL – so we're waiting on surgeon advice as to what the procedure is going to be. But it's going to be a good few months."

Bettinelli was Fulham's first-choice keeper last season and recently signed a new four-year deal at Craven Cottage.

Fulham were looking to sign another keeper, on loan, this week to provide back-up to the experienced Andy Lonergen, who has taken over the gloves in Bettinelli's absence.

■ **AN injury-time volley by Cauley Woodrow earned Fulham a 1-1 draw at home to Huddersfield Town on Saturday.**

With just seconds of the game remaining, Dan Burn had ventured forward and it was his knockdown from a long punt forward that fell to substitute Woodrow to fire home at the Hammersmith end.

Whites looked to be heading for defeat after Nahki Wells had put the visitors in front just after the hour mark, capitalising on some typically chaotic defending before firing past the helpless Lonergan.

"Maybe getting a late goal, rather than conceding one, will provide the little bit of luck we need to get us going," said Symons.

The draw leaves Fulham still looking for their first win of the league campaign ahead of this Saturday's visit to Rotherham.

"We've been involved in four Championship games and they've all been incredibly tight, which is what this league is all about," continued Symons. "I would have liked a bigger points return from the four, that's obvious, but we've been in touch in every match and should have got more out of them. At least today we had a late rally and grabbed a point and maybe that's the kick-start we need.

"There are things that aren't right but we're trying to rectify them. We want a little bit of luck. We get a boy (Sakari Matilla) injured in the warm-up, we get another (Shaun Hutchinson) injured after five minutes. We need something to go our way and it will."

Sections of the home crowd made their feelings known at the final whistle and Symons responded: "I understand it. I've been around football a long time and I know how the game works. People get restless. But also I know you need to show real character to get through tough times and it makes you all the better for it. I will always do the right things for this club."

Symons confirmed he was still keen to strengthen his side, adding: "Hopefully, because there are certain things that we need. It's about getting the right players in. I'm told things are close but until they sign anything can happen. You can be quite confident you've got someone and it falls through at the last minute."

■ MOURINHO ON LATEST RED CARD – p27

RANGERS 'DO IT FOR STAN BOWLES' – page 27